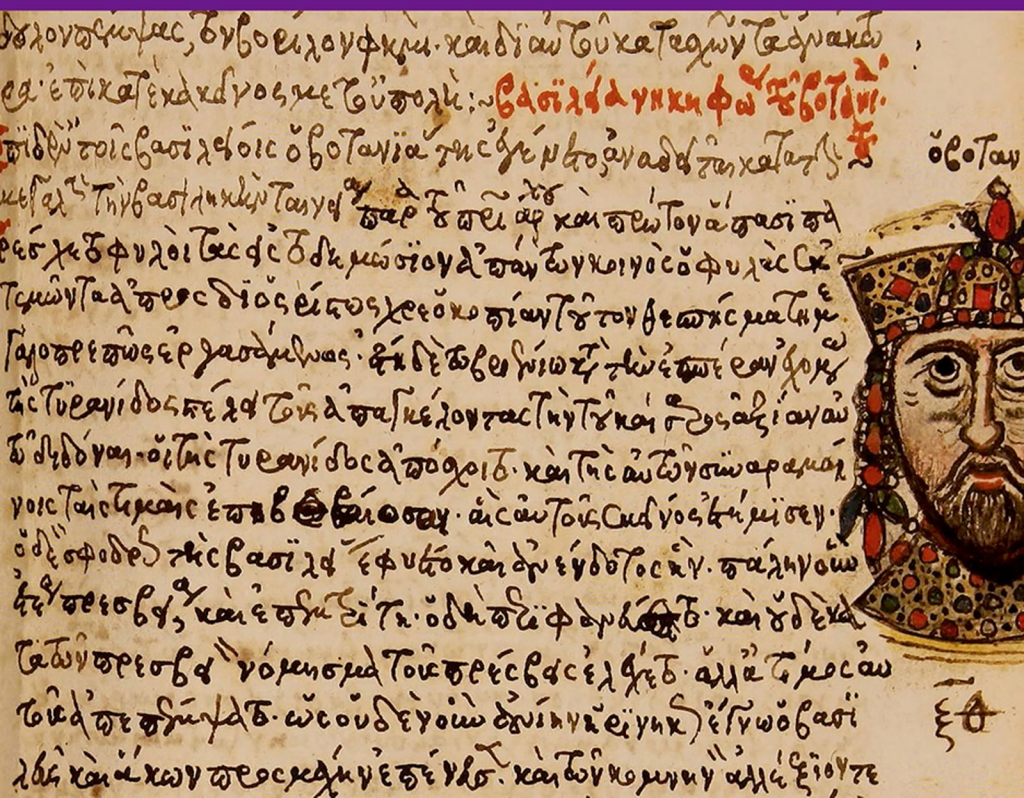


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# John Zonaras' *Epitome of Histories*

*A Compendium of Jewish-Roman History  
and Its Reception*

THEOFILI KAMPIANAKI



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*To my parents, Kyriakos and Evangelia*



# Preface and Acknowledgements

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## Note on Transliteration, Citations, and Quotations

As there is no standard form for the transliteration of Greek names, place names, and terms in general, I have used the versions of these words that appear in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*.

Abbreviations of journals and databases are listed in full at the beginning of the book. Publications cited in abbreviated form are cited in full in the Bibliography at the end. Primary texts in prose are cited by page number and, if necessary, line. Primary texts in verse are cited by verse.

Quotations in Greek which exceed three lines/verses are indented. Shorter quotations in Greek run on in the text. All translations from Medieval Greek into English are my own, unless otherwise indicated in the footnotes.



# List of Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , 71 vols (Paris, 1863–1940)
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> <sup>3</sup> , ed. by F. Halkin, 3 vols in 1 pt (Brussels, 1957)
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
Byz	<i>Byzantion</i>
ByzSym	<i>Byzantina Symmeikta</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
DBBE	<i>Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
Lampe	<i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> , ed. by G. W. H. Lampe (Oxford, 1961–1968)
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , ed. by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, 9th edn with supplement (Oxford, 1968)
ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , ed. by A. Kazhdan et al., 3 vols (Oxford, 1991)
PBW	<i>Prosopography of the Byzantine World</i>
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Graeca</i> , ed. by J.-P. Migne, 161 vols in 166 parts (Paris, 1857–1866)
REB	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
TM	<i>Travaux et mémoires</i>
ZRVI	<i>Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta</i>



# Introduction

The twelfth-century chronicle of John Zonaras begins with the biblical Creation and ends in 1118, the year when Alexios I Komnenos passed away (b. 1056–d. 1118) and was succeeded by his son, John II Komnenos (b. 1087–d. 1143). Covering a lengthy period of time, Zonaras offers a compact account of the early Christian past and the past of the Byzantine state. To carry out his wide-ranging project, he combines an impressive variety of sources, of both a theological and a secular nature, that deal with Jewish, Ancient Greek, Near Eastern, Roman, and Byzantine history. A feature of Zonaras' chronicle that is particularly impressive is its enormous length. The work is one of the longest historical accounts written in Greek that has come down to us; it covers a little less than 2000 pages of printed text in the three-volume critical edition of the work in the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* series.

The chronicle was undoubtedly one of the most popular historical works of the Greek-speaking world during the Middle Ages, with a remarkably large number of manuscripts preserving the entire text or parts of it. Previous scholarship identified seventy-four manuscripts that transmit the chronicle or extracts from it, excluding codices containing paraphrases, translations of the work into other languages, and *metaphrases* into Greek of a lower linguistic register.<sup>1</sup> The text has often been employed as a source of information by scholars interested in a wide range of subject areas, such as Byzantine literature, Late Antique and Byzantine history, and Slavonic historiography. In addition, it has long been known to and used by scholars of Classical Studies, as it famously provides an essential basis for the reconstruction of classical and late antique sources no longer extant, with the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio being the most prominent example.

Zonaras' chronicle has seen four editions over the centuries. It was first published in 1557 by Hieronymus Wolf.<sup>2</sup> This was accompanied by a Latin translation and came out in three volumes. The first volume began with the Creation of the world, the second with the legendary story of Aeneas, and the third with the reign of Constantine the Great. The next edition of the chronicle was that of Charles Ducange in 1686.<sup>3</sup> The French scholar published the work in

<sup>1</sup> See Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta'.

<sup>2</sup> John Zonaras, *Ioannis Zonarae compendium historiarum*, ed. by H. Wolf, 3 vols (Basel, 1557). Wolf's *praefatio* is reprinted in *Epitome*, I, xxiv–xlii.

<sup>3</sup> John Zonaras, *Ioannis Zonarae Annales*, ed. by C. Ducange, 2 vols (Paris, 1686). Ducange's introduction is reprinted in *Epitome*, I, vii–xxviii.



two volumes and, for reasons of practicality and convenience, split Zonaras' material into eighteen books. The division of the text in this way was also followed by subsequent editors of the chronicle. Neither Wolf nor Ducange had at their disposal the oldest and arguably the best manuscript which transmits the work, the *Par. gr.* 1715, which is dated to 1289. This codex was employed for the first time by Ludwig Dindorf in his edition of the chronicle (1868–1875) for the Teubner series.<sup>4</sup> The disadvantage of this edition is that it does not have a critical apparatus.

The last edition of the text is that by Moritz Pinder and Theodor Büttner-Wobst in the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* series. This comprises three volumes and is the edition commonly in use nowadays. Pinder published the first two volumes between 1841 and 1844. The *Par. gr.* 1715 is the principal codex on which this edition of the chronicle is based. Pinder also made use of three later codices: the fourteenth-century *Vind. hist. gr.* 16; the late thirteenth-century *Monac. gr.* 324; and the sixteenth-century *Monac. gr.* 93.<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the last, which preserves the chronicle from the reign of Constantine the Great onwards, the other manuscripts contain the entire work. The third volume of the text was published in 1897 by Büttner-Wobst, who, in addition to the aforementioned manuscripts, also took into consideration the fourteenth-century *Monac. gr.* 325,<sup>6</sup> which transmits only the second volume of the chronicle (Books 10–18).

Based on the manuscripts at their disposal, Ducange and Wolf published the chronicle under the title *Χρονικόν*.<sup>7</sup> Following his predecessors, Pinder published the text under the same title in the first two volumes of the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* series.<sup>8</sup> He made this choice, despite the fact that the heading found in the new manuscript available to him, the *Par. gr.* 1715, was 'ἐπιτομὴ ἱστοριῶν συλλεγέῖσα καὶ συγγραφείσα παρὰ Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ τοῦ ζωναραῶ'.<sup>9</sup> Dindorf, on the contrary, acknowledging the importance of the *Par. gr.* 1715 as the oldest codex preserving the chronicle, made 'Ἐπιτομὴ ἱστοριῶν' the title to the work in his edition for the Teubner series.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Büttner-Wobst, the only scholar who had made extensive investigations into the manuscript tradition of the text by that point,<sup>11</sup> published the third volume of Zonaras' chronicle in the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* series under the title *Epitomae historiarum*.<sup>12</sup> Hence, I use the title *Epitome (of Histories)* to refer to Zonaras' chronicle. Interestingly, this title—*Epitome of Histories*—has also prevailed in the secondary literature.

<sup>4</sup> *Epitome historiarum*, ed. by Dindorf. <sup>5</sup> *Epitome*, I, v–vi.

<sup>6</sup> *Epitome*, III, xviii–xxi.

<sup>7</sup> *Epitome*, I, 3 (critical apparatus).

<sup>8</sup> *Epitome*, I, 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, (critical apparatus). This is also the title found in the *Vind. hist. gr.* 16.

<sup>10</sup> *Epitome historiarum*, ed. by Dindorf, I, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Büttner-Wobst, 'Textgeschichte'; Büttner-Wobst, 'Nachtrag'.

<sup>12</sup> *Epitome*, III (the title pages of the volume).

Three translations of the text into modern languages have been published, all of which are partial. A section of the chronicle from the reign of John Tzimiskes onwards was translated into German by Erich Trapp.<sup>13</sup> An annotated translation into Modern Greek was produced by Iordanis Grigoriadis.<sup>14</sup> This extends from the reign of Constantine the Great to the end of the work. The most recent translation is that of Thomas Banchich and Eugene Lane and is into English. These two scholars have translated Zonaras' prologue, as well as the part of the text covering the period from the reign of Severus Alexander to that of Theodosios I.<sup>15</sup> Their translation is accompanied by a commentary.

In the nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarly literature, Zonaras' *Epitome* attracted attention almost exclusively on account of the sources that underpin it. Considered solely in this context, though, the chronicle was perceived, and often disparaged, as merely a compilation of earlier accounts. There have been more recent studies by classical scholars which investigate different aspects of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* that can be deduced from Zonaras' text.<sup>16</sup> However, by employing the chronicle in this way, classicists do not really do justice to the thoughtful manner in which Zonaras tailored his primary sources to suit his own purposes. In the past thirty years, notable studies on the *Epitome* have related to the chronicler's political ideas and critique of the Komnenian system of government.<sup>17</sup> There have also been investigations that shed light on the discrepancies between Zonaras' and Anna Komnene's presentation of the reign of Alexios Komnemos,<sup>18</sup> as well as investigations that look more closely at Zonaras' ideology, method of work, and discourse of gender.<sup>19</sup> Such studies represent a significant step in the direction of acknowledging and appreciating the historical and literary merits of the *Epitome*. They have thus paved the way for a more thorough examination of the chronicle, one which explores issues that have never been properly addressed and critically improves the current understanding of the text, as this book seeks to do.

So far, the only book-length study of the *Epitome* is that of Iordanis Grigoriadis, which was published in 1998.<sup>20</sup> Grigoriadis focused particularly on the linguistic and literary qualities of the chronicle, emphasizing the author's skills in employing puns and figurative expressions, in using colourful vocabulary and in making

<sup>13</sup> Trapp, *Militärs*.

<sup>14</sup> John Zonaras, *Επιτομή Ιστοριών*, trans. into Greek by I. Grigoriadis, 3 vols (Athens, 1995–1999).

<sup>15</sup> Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance: Fromentin, 'Zonaras abrégiateur'; Urso, 'The Origin'; Simons, *Cassius Dio*; Swan, *The Augustan Succession*.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example: Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 47–8; Fryde *Renaissance*, 53–4; Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom'. This study of P. Magdalino is older, but still valuable: Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik'.

<sup>18</sup> Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί*, 521–6; Angold, 'Afterword'.

<sup>19</sup> L. Orlov Vilimonović, 'Contextualizing Gender in XII century Byzantine Discourse: Women and Power in Ioannes Zonaras' *Epitome Historiarum*', *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnography SASA*, 69 (2021), 365–87; Mallan, 'The Historian'; Kampianaki, 'Plutarch's *Lives*'; Matheou, 'City and Sovereignty'.

<sup>20</sup> Grigoriadis, *Studies*.

telling changes to the language of his sources. He demonstrated, furthermore, that although Zonaras drew heavily on earlier materials, one can pinpoint certain literary preferences (such as the preference for the passive voice and the *hypotaxis*) that characterized the chronicler's own style throughout the *Epitome*. Overall, according to Grigoriadis, the style of the chronicler is refined, sophisticated, and elegant, but at the same time smooth and easy to follow. In particular, his observations that Zonaras writes in the language of the learned tradition, using forms of contemporary spoken Greek only on rare occasions, are astute and accurate.<sup>21</sup> Showing neatly that the linguistic register of the *Epitome* is relatively high, the scholar challenged the view of Zonaras as simply a copyist of earlier material, and thus fostered further investigations into literary aspects of the *Epitome*. It should also be noted that Grigoriadis was one of the first scholars to discuss the subject of humour in Byzantine literature. He makes thoughtful remarks on elements of humour and irony in the *Epitome*, which emerge in connection with either Zonaras' content or wordplay.<sup>22</sup>

This book concentrates on different aspects of Zonaras' *Epitome*: its composition (Chapter 2), sources (Chapter 3), and political, ideological, and literary background (Chapters 4 and 5). It also includes discussions that go beyond the text, such as on the intellectual networks surrounding Zonaras (Chapter 6), and the anticipated audience and the reception of the chronicle (Chapters 6 and 7, respectively). This twin focus—on the work itself and the circumstances of its production—may lead to an appreciation of the unique character of Zonaras' intellectual achievement. Examining his ambitious enterprise in its own right, this book aims to show Zonaras as a compiler who pursued his own authorial agenda, and to present his chronicle as a product which emerged from a milieu characterized by the increased contacts with Western people and the Komnenian style of rulership in the imperial bureaucracy. Although the topic of the book and the basis of all the investigations is the *Epitome*, material derived from the writer's other works is sometimes used as supplementary evidence to prove or reinforce a point.

Chapter 1 contains a preliminary discussion of the author's life and oeuvre. The first half of the chapter provides an outline of the information available to us about Zonaras and, perhaps more importantly, clarifies what is known about him with certainty and what is only speculation. It also explores the serious dating issues concerning the period in which he lived and wrote. The second half of the chapter is dedicated to Zonaras' literary production, looking at the works he composed in addition to the *Epitome*. This survey sheds light on Zonaras' wide range of scholarly activities and interests.

<sup>21</sup> See, particularly, Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 79–81.

<sup>22</sup> Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 133–47.

The examination of the *Epitome* begins in Chapter 2, which is concerned with the text's composition. The chapter explains the two ways in which Zonaras arranged his material: in volumes; and in thematic units. Focusing mainly on the thematic structure of the work, it demonstrates that the chronicle was not conceived in its present form right from the start. I seek to show that Zonaras gradually developed his project into a universal historical account over a considerable period of time.

The third chapter looks at the author's method of work, exploring particularly how he used the multifarious material at his disposal. It provides an overview of the principal sources underpinning the text, and subsequently tries to pinpoint the writer's methods as an epitomizer. Among the questions raised are how Zonaras treated the different sources he collected, how he adapted his material to suit the interests of his contemporary audience, and what factors guided the selection of information inserted into or omitted from his narrative. In the light of these considerations, this chapter identifies key features of Zonaras' narrative.

The fourth chapter deals with the work's political and ideological framework. The focus rests primarily on the author's *Kaiserkritik*, his harsh criticism of imperial policies, and generally on his political and ideological sympathies. The impetus for these discussions comes from one of the best-known passages of the *Epitome*, Zonaras' critical judgement of the reign of Alexios Komnenos. This chapter outlines the basic reasons why the chronicler condemns the founder of the Komnenian dynasty and the Komnenian style of government as a whole, and also tries to find similar points raised about earlier emperors. This investigation aims to prove that Zonaras' disapproval of Alexios reflects an outright rejection of certain policies that were implemented by various emperors in the past. The chapter also indicates the basic tenets which, according to the writer, form the basis of a lawful or a tyrannical state, and which should be used as standards for the assessment of an emperor. As will be shown, Zonaras reaches the conclusion that there can be no perfect rulers. The second part of this chapter looks more broadly into views of an ideological and social nature which emerge from the text and which can be seen in the alterations the chronicler makes to his primary source material.

Zonaras' pronounced interest in Roman antiquity is the subject of Chapter 5. His attention to the Roman origins of the Empire is set within the broader intellectual, literary, and historical milieu of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The chapter emphasizes and tries to account for Zonaras' avid interest in Republican Rome, indicating that his purpose was to demonstrate to his readers the development of the Roman forms of government over the course of time. It subsequently focuses on his attempt to use and coin terms that could accurately explain the gradual transition of the Roman polity from republic to monarchy.

Chapter 6 looks into the circumstances surrounding the production of the *Epitome*. It seeks to challenge the image of the isolated retiree that Zonaras cultivates for himself and to prove that the author was part of a network of intellectuals outside his monastery. It is argued that it was through this network that he managed to acquire the impressive variety of sources he exploited in his chronicle, and also to make the *Epitome* available to his audience. These considerations then provide the ground for an analysis of the anticipated audience of the work—the readers to whom the chronicler originally addressed his text.

The last chapter of the book is centred on the immediate and long-term reception of the chronicle. It aims to provide an insight into how approximate contemporaries of Zonaras, as well as readers in later times, encountered, perceived, and exploited the *Epitome*. Methodologically, it relies on two types of material: primary sources; and evidence derived from the manuscript tradition of the chronicle. The chapter considers the manner in which Byzantine authors who were active after Zonaras made use of his material in their own writings. It also offers examples of interesting marginal comments that are found in manuscripts of the *Epitome* and looks at how scribes who copied the text tried to organize such a lengthy narrative, namely how they divided the chronicle into shorter sections, and what titles they gave to each of these. The overall character of the codices in which parts of the text are contained is also a focus. Special attention is given to two longer pieces of writing which are significant testimonies to the reception of the chronicle. The chapter finally considers the fourteenth-century translations of the work into Old Church Slavonic and Aragonese, concentrating on the circumstances of their composition and the reasons why they attracted the attention of their respective audiences. It should be said in advance that, for practical reasons, my study of the reception of the *Epitome* is chronologically restricted, pertaining to its reception from the mid-twelfth to the fifteenth century.

Overall, the aim of this book is to identify the unique qualities of the *Epitome* which make the work stand out, and thus determine its place within the tradition of Byzantine historical writing.

# 1

## John Zonaras

### Biography and Oeuvre

#### 1.1 Prosopographical and Chronological Details

Very little is known about John Zonaras. Most of the information we have about his life and career derive from his two most famous works, the *Epitome* and his commentary on canon law. To investigate Zonaras' life, it is necessary to pinpoint when these two works were produced, which in itself is an extremely problematic task, as we shall see. Also, the prosopographical and chronological data about the author which is supported by solid evidence should be distinguished from that which represents merely plausible hypotheses.

The family name of Zonaras can be traced back to the mid-tenth century.<sup>1</sup> It was only from the mid-eleventh century, though, that members of the family made their presence known in public affairs and entered the civilian bureaucracy.<sup>2</sup> From a seal dateable to the last third of the eleventh century, we learn of a certain Nicholas Zonaras, who was a judge in Thrace and Macedonia.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that he is the same Nicholas who, at the end of the century, held the offices of the *krites tou Hippodromou* and the *meegas chartoularios*, as well as the title of the *protovestarches*.<sup>4</sup> A notice in a thirteenth-century *synaxarion* attests to the presence of a monk named Naukratios Zonaras in the monastery on the small island of St Glykeria (the modern Incir Adasi), one of the Princes' Islands, during

<sup>1</sup> Reaching c.945, *Theophanes Continuatus* tells us of a cunning Zonaras, a colleague of a devious prefect at the court of the Lekapenoi: *Theophanes continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius monachus*, ed. by I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 442.1–6.

<sup>2</sup> Treadgold, *Historians*, 390–1; Kaltsogianni, *Αγιολογικό και όμιλητικό έργο*, 6–7.

<sup>3</sup> See *PBW* (consulted 06.11.2020), 'Nikolaos Zo(u)naras, Krites of Thrace and Macedonia', <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/boulloterion/6684>. For his seal, see Seibt, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel*, 235–6.

<sup>4</sup> See *PBW* (consulted 06.11.2020), 'Nikolaos Zonaras, Krites of the Hippodrome LXI', <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/120465>. The *krites tou Hippodromou* was a professional judge whose tribunal must have been at the Hippodrome: A. Kazhdan, 'Judge', *ODB*, II, 1078. The *kritai tou Hippodromou* were not among the top-ranked judicial officers, dealing with cases referred to them by the emperor or by superior judges: Gkoutzioukostas, 'Administrative Structures', 571. *Chartoularioi* were 'functionaries with fiscal and archival duties in both central and provincial administration'. From the late tenth century onwards, the epithet *meegas* accompanied the title of the *chartoularioi of the genikon*: A. Kazhdan, 'Chartoularios', *ODB*, I, 416. See also Gkoutzioukostas, 'Administrative Structures', 570, in which the office of *meegas chartoularios* is listed among other secretarial offices. From the end of the eleventh century, the title *protovestarches* was granted to judges and notaries: Kazhdan, 'Vestes'.

the first half of the twelfth century.<sup>5</sup> Naukratios was among the benefactors of the restoration of the monastery's main church. Before taking monastic vows, he is said to have been a *droungarios tes viglas*, the chief of 'the central and supreme tribunal of the Byzantine state'.<sup>6</sup> Although Cyril Mango does not rule out that the Naukratios mentioned in this source might be identified with John Zonaras, the author of the *Epitome*, he considers it more likely that Naukratios was the monastic name of this same Nicholas, who at a later stage of his career became *droungarios tes viglas* and was tonsured at some time thereafter.<sup>7</sup> In c.1090, a Basil Zonaras was granted the title of *vestes*.<sup>8</sup> Slightly later than John, the writer of the *Epitome*, is a Christopher Zonaras. In the mid- to late-twelfth century, he became a *protasekretis* and is known to have composed a paraenetic text and a series of letters.<sup>9</sup> *Protasekretis* was also the office of another Nicholas Zonaras, who was active during the reign of Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143–1180).<sup>10</sup> He was appointed *nobelissimos* and *droungarios tes viglas* as well.<sup>11</sup> As is clearly indicated by this evidence, the author of the *Epitome* belonged to a family whose members enjoyed prominent positions in the machinery of the state and who had distinguished themselves particularly in the judicial system.

The titles that precede Zonaras' works in manuscripts reveal that, just like his relatives, he was a high-level judicial official: a *protasekretis* and a *megas droungarios*. These titles also accompany the name of Zonaras in an epistle penned by the thirteenth-century jurist Demetrios Chomatenos, who cites Zonaras' exegesis of the canons as his source.<sup>12</sup> Zonaras can, therefore, be placed among those historians dating from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries who were all prominent administrators of justice, namely Michael Attaleiates,

<sup>5</sup> Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices,' 221–2.

<sup>6</sup> Gkoutzioukostas, 'Administrative Structures,' 571. See also Haldon, *The Palgrave Atlas*, 132; Macrides, 'Nomos and Kanon,' 72.

<sup>7</sup> Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices,' 226–7.

<sup>8</sup> See *PBW* (consulted 06.11.2020), 'Basileios Zonaras LXI', <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/152325>. For a seal on which his name and office is inscribed, see Seibt, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel*, 234–5. Towards the end of the eleventh century, the title of *vestes* was given to lower-ranking officials. It seems to have disappeared in the early twelfth century: Kazhdan, 'Vestes'.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Zonaras, *Χριστοφόρου Ζωναρά, Ι. Λόγος Παραινετικός εις τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ κυρὸν Δημήτριον. ΙΙ. Ἐπιστολές*, ed. by E. Tsolakis (Thessalonike, 1981). See also *PBW* (consulted 06.11.2020), 'Christophoros Zonaras XII', <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/152587>. In the twelfth century, the *protasekretis* was a high-ranking judicial officer, who also performed some duties as member of the imperial secretariat: Gkoutzioukostas, 'Administrative Structures,' 563–4. See, also, Haldon, *The Palgrave Atlas*, 132; A. Kazhdan, 'Protasekretis', *ODB*, III, 1742.

<sup>10</sup> See *PBW* (consulted 06.11.2020), 'Nikolaos Zonaras M/LXII', <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/120458>. It seems probable that this Nikolaos was the grandson of Naukratios.

<sup>11</sup> From the mid-eleventh century onwards, the dignity of *nobelissimos* was meant for members of the imperial family, but from the end of the century it was also awarded to high-ranking military commanders: A. Kazhdan, 'Nobelissimos', *ODB*, III, 1489–90.

<sup>12</sup> Demetrios Chomatenos, *Ἡ ἐπιστολή πρὸς τὸν χρηματίσαντα μητροπολίτην Κερκύρας, τὸν Πεδιαδίτην...*, in *Πονήματα διάφορα*, ed. by G. Prinzing (Berlin, 2002), 52.176–7.



John Skylitzes, Niketas Choniates, and George Akropolites.<sup>13</sup> From his distinguished career, one can infer that he had received a strong education in rhetoric and the learned language of the state administration, and that he excelled in legal science.<sup>14</sup> In his works, he makes direct use of a series of classical authors, such as Cassius Dio, Plutarch, Herodotus, and Xenophon, attesting to his classical education. One may reasonably assume that his family had the financial means to support him in the pursuit of his studies. Nothing is known about his private life. Introducing the *Epitome*, he confesses that God had deprived him of those dearest to him.<sup>15</sup> This piece of information may allude to some painful family losses.

In the very first lines of his chronicle Zonaras informs us that he is writing having assumed the monk's habit.<sup>16</sup> He describes the place where he currently resides as 'the end of the world' ('ἔσχατιά'),<sup>17</sup> adding later in his text that it is an island away from Constantinople.<sup>18</sup> Zonaras' image as an author living far away from the capital is extensively treated in Chapter 6.<sup>19</sup> The monastery to which the chronicler retired was that of the Theotokos Pantanassa, a foundation located on the island of St Glykeria. The name of Zonaras' monastery is given in some manuscripts that transmit the chronicle or his canonical commentary, such as the *Ambros. gr.* 411, the *Vat. gr.* 828 and the *Ath. Vat. gr.* 228.<sup>20</sup>

The Zonaras family seems to have had a close connection with the Pantanassa monastery, the same monastic foundation to which Naukratios Zonaras had withdrawn. During the Komnenian period, when it was common for private individuals to build and endow monasteries, religious houses were often treated as family establishments.<sup>21</sup> Because Naukratios was among the benefactors who contributed to the refoundation of the Pantanassa, his authority would be recognized among the members of its community. Understandably, therefore, the Zonaras family would occupy a special place in the monastery, which must have been one of the principal reasons why the chronicler decided to retire there. This is practically all we know for certain about the writer of the *Epitome*.

A further clue about Zonaras' life might come from the fact that he penned two exegetical works of religious poetry: one dealing with the Resurrectional Canons in the *Octoechos*; and another with Gregory of Nazianzos' *Gnomic Tetrastichs*. More information about these texts will be given in the second part of this

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the observations in Neville, *Heroes*, 29; *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Volume 2: 400–1400*, ed. by S. Foot and C. Robinson (Oxford, 2012), 233; Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 360. For a study of eleventh- and twelfth-century historians against the background of their legal knowledge, see also A. Laiou, 'Imperial Marriages and Their Critics in the Eleventh Century: The Case of Skylitzes', *DOP*, 46 (1992), 165–76, particularly 166–7.

<sup>14</sup> For Zonaras' legal training, see the observations in Pieler, 'Johannes Zonaras als Kanonist', 601–2.

<sup>15</sup> *Epitome*, I, 3.6.

<sup>16</sup> *Epitome*, I, 3.1–5.

<sup>17</sup> *Epitome*, I, 8.13.

<sup>18</sup> *Epitome*, II, 297.22.

<sup>19</sup> See pp. 109–12 of this book.

<sup>20</sup> Kaltsogianni, *Δγολογικὸ καὶ ὁμιλητικὸ ἔργο*, 14; Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta', 234.

<sup>21</sup> Angold, *Church and Society*, 265–308.



chapter.<sup>22</sup> As a genre, hermeneutical works of this kind were meant to be didactic textbooks for use in schools.<sup>23</sup> They would be produced by teachers or former teachers of grammar for the requirements of courses and lectures. Both of Zonaras' exegeses can probably be dated to the time when he was at the Pantanassa monastery and were written at the request of a third party. The fact that Zonaras was asked to compose commentaries which would serve educational purposes suggests, in my opinion, that he himself had some prior teaching experience.<sup>24</sup> He may have worked as a teacher for some time in Constantinople, most likely before beginning his career in the judicial system.

The *terminus post quem* for the completion of the *Epitome* is 1143. Referring to the emperor John II Komnenos, Zonaras makes use of the pronoun 'ἐκεῖνος', which is commonly used in connection with the deceased.<sup>25</sup> It is also used by the author when he mentions Alexios Komnenos.<sup>26</sup> This observation strongly suggests that the chronicle was completed in or after 1143, the year of John Komnenos' death.

The *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the work can be established in relation to another chronicle, the *Chronike Synopsis* of Constantine Manasses. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 7, the *Epitome* was one of the major sources employed by Manasses for the composition of his historical account.<sup>27</sup> This, however, makes the matter even more complicated, as the dating of Manasses' work also poses a problem; his chronicle can be loosely dated to between 1143 and 1152.<sup>28</sup> Taken together, this evidence suggests that Zonaras must have completed his chronicle in or after 1143, even in the late 1140s, but before c.1150.

It would be useful to clarify at this point that the concept of 'completing', 'finishing', or 'publishing' a work was not as straightforward in Byzantium as it is today. Byzantine writings were much less stable than modern texts, in the sense that authors often subsequently revised or expanded parts of their works. A process of editing or even updating a text by incorporating material related to recent events has been observed in various genres of Byzantine literature. I can offer a few examples. Dedicatory epigrams were frequently redrafted over and over again by their composers, in order for the final product to be pleasing to both the poets and their patrons.<sup>29</sup> The best example which can be given from the

<sup>22</sup> See pp. 22–4 of this book.

<sup>23</sup> Ronchey, 'An Introduction to Eustathios'; Dimitrakopoulos, 'The Exegeses'.

<sup>24</sup> Fotios Dimitrakopoulos, though, seems to be of a different opinion, as he does not find 'evidence of an instructive intention' in Zonaras' exegetical works: Dimitrakopoulos, 'The Exegeses', 156.

<sup>25</sup> *Epitome*, III, 762.10–1. See Angold, 'Afterword', 400.

<sup>26</sup> *Epitome*, III, 765.1 and 765.5.

<sup>27</sup> For a comparison between the chronicles of Zonaras and Manasses, and an analysis of the way in which Manasses exploited the *Epitome*, see pp. 125–8 of this book.

<sup>28</sup> For the dating of the text, see Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, I, xviii–xx, as well as the remarks of E. Jeffreys in *Four Byzantine Novels* (Liverpool, 2012), 273–4.

<sup>29</sup> Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 41–4.

field of history is the historical account of Niketas Choniates, who flourished a few decades after Zonaras. As is evident from its manuscript transmission, Choniates' *History* went through several stages of composition and revision by the author himself before reaching its final form.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, imperial orations from the Palaiologan period would occasionally be reworked and circulate in more than one version.<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, it appears that Zonaras, having completed a first draft of the *Epitome*, later re-edited his chronicle or added some material to the initial version. Investigating the manuscripts of the *Epitome* and focusing specifically on the section about the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great,<sup>32</sup> Michele Bandini demonstrated that, in one branch of the manuscript tradition, the chronicle incorporates a summary of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, while, in another branch, it uses a summary of *Cyropaedia* with some additional information from an external source, Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* (henceforth: *JA*).<sup>33</sup> Bandini concluded that, having initially produced a summary of Xenophon's work, Zonaras inserted supplementary material into this part of his text at a later stage. It seems that he made these additions when an initial version of the *Epitome* had already started circulating, which explains the different branches of the manuscript tradition. Besides, it would make sense that various drafts of the work had been produced and were circulating long before the 'publication' of the chronicle, especially given the enormous length of the text and the great amount of time Zonaras would have needed to finish it. The author might have distributed initial drafts of shorter sections of his work. Certain parts of the *Epitome* would have lent themselves to this. Notably, the section of the chronicle that deals with Jewish antiquities (Books 1 to 6) could well have been sent out in advance of the whole work, since, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, it is largely a self-contained unit. A second suggestion would be that the author circulated and sent out separately the first volume of the *Epitome* (Books 1 to 9). Notably, the author could well have finished a draft of the *Epitome* prior to John Komnenos' death, but amended his text accordingly in or after 1143. Manasses did have at his disposal a complete draft of the chronicle when he composed his own work, but whether Zonaras continued to make changes to the *Epitome* after that date is unclear. When viewed in this

<sup>30</sup> Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 69–127; A. Simpson, 'Before and After 1204: The Versions of Niketas Choniates' "Historia"', *DOP*, 60 (2006), 189–221.

<sup>31</sup> Toth, 'Rhetorical Theatron', 446–7. <sup>32</sup> *Epitome*, I, 260.16–303.11.

<sup>33</sup> M. Bandini, 'L'uso delle fonti in sede di recensisio: la *Ciropedia* di Zonara (Epit. III 15–26)', in *Textual Transmission*, ed. by Signes Codoñer and Pérez Martín, 331–52, at 347–9. It should be noted at this point that Zonaras made use of an epitome of the *JA*. Benedikt Niese, the editor of Josephus' writings, was the first to argue that Zonaras did not make direct use of the *JA*, but had access to an epitome of the work instead. He also published the epitome of the *JA* which is believed to have been Zonaras' source: *Flavii Josephi Antiquitatum Iudaicarum epitome*, ed. by B. Niese (Berlin, 1896). Later studies which agree that this epitome of the *JA* was employed by Zonaras include: Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 141–4; Büttner-Wobst, 'Abhängigkeit', 126–7.

context, the date when the final version of the work was completed remains elusive.

In the commentary on the canons, we find a chronological indication that has often been taken to be the *terminus post quem* for the author's death. It comes from Zonaras' exegesis on canon seven of the Council of Neokaisareia, which forbids churchmen from attending the weddings of people who are re-marrying.<sup>34</sup> Zonaras approves of this prohibition, but bitterly observes that it is applied only on paper. Clearly showing his dissatisfaction with contemporary ecclesiastics, he says that: 'I witnessed the patriarch and several metropolitans attending the wedding festivities of an emperor who had just got married for a second time' (ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ πατριάρχης ὄφθη, καὶ μητροπολίται διάφοροι, συνεστιώμενοι δευτερογαμήσαντι βασιλεῖ). It is usually believed that Zonaras is alluding here to the second wedding of Manuel Komnenos, who married Maria of Antioch on Christmas Day of 1161.<sup>35</sup> However, a few years ago Banchich questioned whether this short segment was original to the writer and, in the event that it did come from his pen, suggested that it might refer to Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078–1081) instead, the other emperor (aside from Manuel) who got married more than once and falls into the period when Zonaras could have lived.<sup>36</sup>

To my mind, it is unlikely that Zonaras' remark is an interpolation. First, this idea is not supported at all by the evidence provided by the work's manuscript transmission, at least so far as one can tell from Rhalles and Potles' edition. Second, the author's critique of the churchmen of his time is in line with the overall attitude exhibited by Zonaras in both his chronicle and his exegesis of the canons, namely open condemnation of practices and phenomena he disapproves of. What is more, a very close parallel to this blunt remark can be found in Zonaras' commentary on canon ninety-six of the Council in Trullo, according to which people with bizarre hairstyles should be excommunicated from the body of the Church.<sup>37</sup> The author expresses his contempt of contemporary churchmen who tolerate those of the faithful who had eccentric appearances. Similarly, in his interpretation of the canon seven of Neokaisareia, Zonaras makes a harsh judgement of the clergymen of his time when he concludes his exegesis. In both cases, he does not hesitate to find fault with the behaviour of high-ranking members of the Church. Within this framework, Zonaras' harsh remarks about clergymen who attended the second wedding of an emperor do not appear foreign to either his attitude or style of writing.

<sup>34</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, III, 80.

<sup>35</sup> See, for instance: Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 206–7; Macrides, 'Perception of the Past', 591 (footnote 13).

<sup>36</sup> Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*, 3. Treadgold rejects the possibility that this sentence might be an addition by a later hand as an 'arbitrary and unlikely assumption', but follows Banchich in his hypothesis that the emperor in question must be Botaneiates: Treadgold, *Historians*, 389.

<sup>37</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, II, 247 and III, 533–5.

The possibility that the emperor under consideration is Botaneiates is also unlikely. In the phrase ‘δευτερογαμήσαντι βασιλεῖ’ in Zonaras’ exegesis, the aorist active participle ‘δευτερογαμήσαντι’ comes from the verb δευτερογαμέω, which means ‘marry for the second time’.<sup>38</sup> In other words, Zonaras makes it clear that an emperor was getting married on that occasion.<sup>39</sup> In *Skylitzes Continuatus*, we read the following about the second wife of Botaneiates, a little-known Bebdene: ‘When his wife Bebdene (she had been proclaimed empress at the same time as Botaneiates ascended the throne) died, the emperor took another wife’ (‘Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ τελευτησάσης τῆς Βεβδηνῆς, ἅμα τῇ ἀναρρήσει ἀναγορευθείσης καὶ αὐτῆς, ἕτεραν ἠγάγετο’).<sup>40</sup> This brief extract says that Botaneiates’ wife was made empress along with her husband. It does not mean that their wedding actually took place along with Botaneiates’ coronation in the year 1078. As the text indicates, Botaneiates probably married Bebdene prior to his accession to the imperial office and crowned her empress when he rose to the throne. In this case, Zonaras’ remark cannot apply to him, because the writer refers explicitly to the wedding of an emperor. Consequently, when commenting on canon seven of the Council of Neokaisareia, Zonaras cannot be making an allusion to Botaneiates, but to Manuel. This indicates that the year 1161 is indeed the *terminus post quem* for the composition of the exegesis on the canons. It is also the *terminus post quem* for the author’s death. In light of these observations, the *Epitome* seems to antedate Zonaras’ canonical work.

Something that should also be underlined is that it is not known why the author took monastic vows. It is generally believed that the chronicler was in the prime of his career as a judge during the reign of Alexios Komnenos and that he was in some way involved in the coup instigated by Anna Komnene and her mother, Irene Doukaina, against John. It is thought that, as a consequence of his interference, he fell from favour and was more or less forced to retire to a

<sup>38</sup> This is the meaning offered for the lemma ‘δευτερογαμέω’ in the *LSJ Suppl.: A Greek English Lexicon, with a Revised Supplement*, ed. by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones (Oxford, 1996). Likewise, Lampe’s lexicon translates ‘δευτερογαμέω’ as ‘marry a second time’: Lampe, 339.

<sup>39</sup> In my opinion, the canon, as a whole, clearly concerns priests, who, through their presence in the wedding itself, give the impression they approve of one’s second marriage. Banchich translates the phrase ‘δευτερογαμήσαντι βασιλεῖ’ as follows: ‘with a sovereign who had been married twice’: Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*, 6. This translation is incorrect, in my view. The meaning ‘marry for the second time’ is different to ‘being married twice’; the first phrase denotes the process of entering into a marriage with somebody, whereas the second the state of already being married to somebody.

<sup>40</sup> *Skylitzes Continuatus*, 181.22–3. We derive some information about Botaneiates’ marriages from Nikephoros Bryennios’ historical account. Bryennios mentions that, after his accession to the throne, Botaneiates married Maria of Alania (the wife of his predecessor, Michael VII Doukas), although he was old and had already been married twice. Bryennios adds that the priest who had been chosen to perform the wedding ceremony was reluctant to bless the union, fearing that Botaneiates’ second wife was still alive: Bryennios, *History*, 253.8–255.7 (Book 3.25). Based on the testimonies of both *Skylitzes Continuatus* and Bryennios, one can deduce that Bebdene, Botaneiates’ second wife, died very soon after his rise to the throne. Immediately afterwards, Botaneiates proceeded to a third marriage to Maria of Alania.

monastery when John ascended the throne. As has been noted by both Ruth Macrides and Eleni Kaltsogianni, this theory was based on a hypothesis raised by Konrad Ziegler in 1972.<sup>41</sup> Ziegler's suggestion came to be accepted as fact by some later scholars, although there are no compelling arguments to support the view that Zonaras was forced to withdraw from public life on account of involvement in Anna's conspiracy.

It is more likely that his retirement to the Pantanassa monastery was associated with events that took place during the reign of John Komnenos. This emerges from what Zonaras says to account for ending his narrative with John's rise to the throne: 'for I have considered it neither advantageous nor opportune to record the events missing' ('δοῦναι γὰρ γραφῆ καὶ τὰ λείποντα οὐ μοι λυσιτελές οὐδ' εὐκαιρον κέκριται').<sup>42</sup> It is clear from this segment that, for some reason, Zonaras regarded it as unwise to discuss the reign of John, who at the time when the *Epitome* was completed was already dead. The chronicler was willing to give an account of Alexios' reign (and severely criticize the emperor's style of rulership), but reluctant to talk about the state of affairs under John. He might have been displeased with some aspects of John's execution of government. If he had continued his work beyond the death of Alexios, Zonaras would have had either to conceal these events or include in his narrative details embarrassing or unflattering to the second Komnenian emperor. Understandably, a negative portrait of John would not have been pleasing to the reigning emperor at that time, Manuel Komnenos, John's son and successor. Perhaps from fear of repercussions, Zonaras did not find it 'opportune' and safe enough to address the administration of the state under John. It would, therefore, seem likely that something happened during the reign of John that meant that the author was no longer welcome at the imperial court; this, consequently, led to his withdrawal to St Glykeria at some time in the 1120s or 1130s. The reasons why Zonaras could have fallen out of favour are unclear; with the limited evidence available to us about the author, we simply cannot arrive at a conclusion.

It is interesting to note that, apart from the *Epitome*, two other historical accounts which were written over the course of Manuel's reign discuss the age of Alexios but do not go into that of John. One, of course, is Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, the greatest part of which was composed when Manuel was head of state.<sup>43</sup> The other is Michael Glykas' chronicle, which was produced after

<sup>41</sup> Kaltsogianni, *Ἀγιολογικὸ καὶ ὁμηλικὸ ἔργο*, 12–13; Macrides, 'Nomos and Kanon', 72–3 (footnote 57); Ziegler, 'Zonaras', 720–1.

<sup>42</sup> *Epitome*, III, 768.2–4. It is worth paying attention to the syntax of this clause. The personal pronoun 'μοι' can either denote the agent of the verb 'κέκριται' or govern the adjective 'λυσιτελές'. In the first case, the text could read as follows: 'For it was considered by me neither advantageous, nor opportune to [...]'. In the second case, the text could read: 'It was considered neither advantageous to me, nor opportune to [...]'. The author seems to have carefully placed the pronoun prior to the 'λυσιτελές' so that his sentence could be read and interpreted in both ways.

<sup>43</sup> Magdalino, 'The Pen of the Aunt', 15–16.

c.1164–1165. As I will show in Chapter 7, Glykas, basing his narrative on the *Epitome*, ends his work with the death of Alexios.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, though, he could have continued his account beyond that point, as people who lived during the reign of John would still have been alive in his own day.<sup>45</sup> Constantine Manasses, whose chronicle was also composed when Manuel was on the throne, openly admits that he did not wish to talk about any of the Komnenian emperors. These observations may suggest that during the reign of Manuel, recounting the history of the first two Komnenian emperors, particularly that of John, was a difficult, if not perilous, task.

There exists no solid evidence about the dates of Zonaras' birth and death, and for the period when he was in the prime of his career as a judge. It does not seem probable that he would have risen to the offices of *megas droungarios* and *protasekretis*, both high-ranking positions in the civilian bureaucracy, before his fortieth year. Assuming that Zonaras abandoned his career as a juridical official some time during the first two decades of John's reign, one can deduce that he must have been born between 1080 at the earliest and 1098 at the latest. If this is indeed true, the author would have been between sixty-three and eighty-one years old in 1161, the *terminus post quem* for the exegesis on the canons.

## Summary List

To bring together what has been discussed so far, I present a list with the key chronologies of Zonaras' life. The timespan of the chronologies is, of course, very wide.

Date of Zonaras' birth: c.1080–1098

Retirement to monastery: 1120s or 1130s

Completion of the *Epitome*: in or after 1143, but before c.1150

Completion of Zonaras' commentary on canon law: in or after 1161

Date of Zonaras' death: in or after 1161

## 1.2 The Oeuvre

A brief overview of Zonaras' overall literary production is essential for two reasons. First, it can offer a more complete picture of his authorial interests and

<sup>44</sup> For Glykas' treatment of the *Epitome* in his chronicle, see p. 129 of this book.

<sup>45</sup> John Kinnamos, who wrote a laudatory history of John and Manuel Komnenos later than Glykas (between 1180 and 1182), indicates that his presentation of John's reign was based on oral accounts: Kinnamos, *Deeds*, 4–6.

areas of expertise. Zonaras was not only a chronicler but also a scholar who penned works in various genres. The *Epitome*, therefore, should be approached as an integral part of his broader oeuvre, rather than a work detached from the rest of his written production. Second, it is necessary to offer some substantial background information on Zonaras' compositions, as material from these works will be occasionally employed in the following chapters to complement the analysis of the chronicle.

### 1.2.1 Commentaries on Canon Law

To a great extent, Zonaras' literary production reflects his background as a juridical functionary. His engagement with the law is best exemplified by his lengthy *Exegesis of the holy and sacred canons* (*Ἐξήγησις τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ θείων κανόνων*), which offers an interpretation of the canons of the apostles, the synods, and the Church Fathers.<sup>46</sup> As has been shown earlier, the *terminus post quem* for the completion of the text is the year 1161. Zonaras' commentary is the second hermeneutical work on the canons produced in the course of the twelfth century, following Alexios Aristenos' and preceding Theodore Balsamon's.

In the proem to his text, Zonaras informs us that he did not embark on this project on his own initiative.<sup>47</sup> He says that he succumbed to the pleadings of a third party from fear that he might be judged disobedient were he to refuse. Statements such as these were commonplace in Byzantine literature. This is not to say, however, that they did not echo the truth. Perhaps the term 'ἀνηκοΐα', used for 'disobedience' in the text, is an oblique reference to monastic obedience (the so-called 'ὑπακοή').<sup>48</sup> On this assumption, Zonaras might have been asked to write his canonical interpretation by a monk whom he was obliged to obey.<sup>49</sup> This man might well have been the abbot of the monastery to which the author had withdrawn.

Zonaras is much more comprehensive in his exegeses than his predecessor Aristenos. Taking as indicative examples the scholia, particularly on the apostolic

<sup>46</sup> Zonaras' commentary on canon law can be found in Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, II–IV. For further information on the work, see Troianos, 'Canon Law', 177–8; Pieler, 'Johannes Zonaras als Canonist'; Macrides, 'Perception of the Past'; Macrides, 'Nomos and Canon'.

<sup>47</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, II, 1.

<sup>48</sup> That the word 'ἀνηκοΐα' may have these connotations is also highlighted by Kaltsogianni in *Ἀγιολογικὸ καὶ ὁμιλητικὸ ἔργο*, 28. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, Zonaras claims to have composed five of his works at the bidding of other people: see p. 39 of this book. It is only in the introduction to his canonical commentary, however, that he presents obedience as the reason why he took up writing.

<sup>49</sup> Identifying the emperor who proceeded to a second marriage as Botaneiates, Banchich dates Zonaras' commentary to a much earlier period and proposes that the author was probably commissioned by Alexios Komnenos to produce an exegesis of the canons: Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*, 4.



canons, Peter Pieler observes that Zonaras tends to paraphrase in his own words the original text of a canon, and that he frequently introduces comments explaining the rationale behind it and gives citations from the Bible.<sup>50</sup> Also, throughout his work, the writer makes heavy use of the writings of the Church Fathers. It is particularly striking that he derives limited information from sources of secular law, quoting only from the *Basilika*.<sup>51</sup> His vague references to the *Basilika* corpus, however, may indicate that he was citing the work from memory.<sup>52</sup> As has been emphasized by Macrides, common features that emerge in both the *Epitome* and the interpretation of canon law are the author's interest in antiquities and his disapproval of changes in traditional customs.<sup>53</sup> It is characteristic, for example, that in both texts we find explanations of Latin terms, along with the equivalent Greek ones.

Zonaras also addresses a question of canon law in his short treatise which bears the title *On the prohibition of the marriage of two cousins related in the sixth degree to the same woman* (Περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν δύο δισεξαδέλφους τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγαγέσθαι πρὸς γάμον).<sup>54</sup> The legal matter on which this text focuses is whether a woman is allowed to marry a man related in the sixth degree by marriage to her first husband. Zonaras carefully lists the series of arguments raised by both parties, namely by those who believe that there is no hindrance to such a union, and by those who claim that a marriage such as this is forbidden not only by civil but also by moral laws. The writer solidly supports and justifies the second view. The treatise is very difficult to date. It is mentioned in passing that current laws prohibited marriage between a man and a woman related up to the sixth degree by blood.<sup>55</sup> The *terminus ante quem* of the text, therefore, is 1166, when the Patriarch Luke Chrysoberges and Manuel Komnenos issued a stricter law, one which did not allow marriage between those related in the seventh degree by blood.<sup>56</sup>

The nature of the text is peculiar. The historian of Byzantine law Konstantinos Pitsakis is inclined to connect the text to a specific court case.<sup>57</sup> In the title of the work, Zonaras appears to write 'on behalf of the chief priests' (ἐκ προσώπου τῶν ἀρχιερέων). It is not clear whether this piece of information was original to the title of the text or was added by a later scribe. Notably, though, that Zonaras is speaking on behalf of a group of high-ranking churchmen does not emerge from the text proper, which may suggest that it is a trustworthy piece of information.

<sup>50</sup> Pieler, 'Johannes Zonaras als Kanonist', 605–6.

<sup>51</sup> Troiannos, 'Canon Law', 178.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Macrides, 'Perception of the Past', 592–5.

<sup>54</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, IV, 592–7. For details on the text, see Kaltsogianni, *Ἀγιολογικὸ καὶ ὁμιλητικὸ ἔργο*, 30–1; Pitsakis, *Τὸ κώλυμα γάμου*, 227–31 and 291–4.

<sup>55</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, IV, 592–3.

<sup>56</sup> Angold, *Church and Society*, 412–3; Pitsakis, *Τὸ κώλυμα γάμου*, 227.

<sup>57</sup> Pitsakis, *Τὸ κώλυμα γάμου*, 291.



Based on this, Pitsakis considers it likely that here the writer was asked to justify the collective vote of priests in a mixed kind of court, civil and ecclesiastical.<sup>58</sup>

Another short text which resulted from Zonaras' canonical interests is the so-called *Speech against those who believe that a natural emission of sperm is a pollution* (*Λόγος πρὸς τοὺς τὴν φυσικὴν τῆς γονῆς ἔκροσιν μιάσμα ἡγουμένους*).<sup>59</sup> This essay is of a theological nature and concerns a subject repeatedly discussed in patristic literature, namely whether monks who have a wet dream in the course of the night should be considered unclean. Zonaras vehemently argues against the views of some highly conservative monastic circles that, when they emit semen, monks become polluted and must not be allowed to receive the Holy Communion or venerate icons. He sees nocturnal emission as a physical process, which, if not a result of conscious sexual thoughts, should not be regarded as impure. In these cases, therefore, monks should not be punished. The author's argument is based on a series of passages from the Bible and the works of the Church Fathers.<sup>60</sup>

### 1.2.2 Hagiographical and Homiletic Works

Zonaras is the writer of six hagiographical texts: (a) the *Life of Silvester*, bishop of Rome (BHG 1633–4); (b) the *Life of Eupraxia* (BHG 631m); (c) a commentary ('*ὑπόμνημα*') on Cyril, bishop of Alexandria (BHG 2099);<sup>61</sup> (d) a commentary on Sophronios, bishop of Jerusalem (BHG 1641); (e) a commentary on the Presentation of Christ to the Temple (BHG 1962c); and (f) a speech about the Veneration of the Cross (BHG 419).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> As has been observed by Alexander Kazhdan, 'the precise demarcation between civil and ecclesiastical courts was not at all clear': A. Kazhdan, 'Court, Law', ODB, I, 543.

<sup>59</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, IV, 598–611.

<sup>60</sup> For a detailed investigation of the text, see M. Perisandi, 'Zonaras's Treatise on Nocturnal Emissions: Introduction and Translation', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 62 (2018), 33–59; Fögen, 'Nocturnal Pollution'.

<sup>61</sup> The Greek term '*ὑπόμνημα*' is a technical term which denotes a commentary on a religious text: see Lampe, 1451. Giving a brief overview of Zonaras' activity as hagiographer, Symeon Paschalidis translates the term into English as 'commentary': S. Paschalidis, 'The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in *Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. by Efthymiadis, 143–71, at 158–9.

<sup>62</sup> For the editions of these texts, see John Zonaras, *Βίος και πολιτεία του εν αγίοις πατρός ἡμῶν Σιλβέστρου πάπα Ρώμης*, ed. by E. Kaltsogianni in: Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και ὁμιλητικό ἔργο*, 529–58; John Zonaras, *Βίος και πολιτεία τῆς ὁσίας μητρὸς ἡμῶν Εὐπραξίας*, ed. by E. Kaltsogianni in: Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και ὁμιλητικό ἔργο*, 507–28; John Zonaras, *Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ τοῦ Ζωναρά, ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὸν ὄσιον ἡμῶν πατέρα Κύριλλον, τὸν τῆς μεγαλοπόλεως Ἀλεξανδρείας ἀρχιεπίσκοπον*, ed. by E. Kaltsogianni in: Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και ὁμιλητικό ἔργο*, 571–84; Zonaras, *Ἰσόμνημα εἰς τὸν Σωφρόνιον*; John Zonaras, *Τοῦ σοφωτάτου και λογιωτάτου... ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὴν πάνσεπτον ἑορτὴν τῆς Ὑπαπαντῆς, τοῦ Κυρίου και Θεοῦ και σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, ed. by E. Kaltsogianni in: Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και ὁμιλητικό ἔργο*, 585–98; John Zonaras, *Τοῦ σοφωτάτου Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ τοῦ Ζωναρά... λόγος περιέχων αἰτίας, δι' ἃς παρέλαβεν ἡ τῶν πιστῶν ἐκκλησία προτιθεῖνὰ τὰ πάνσεπτα ξύλα τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ, κατὰ τὴν μέσσην ἑβδομάδα τῶν τιμίων και ἁγίων νηστειῶν εἰς προσκύνησιν*, ed. by E. Kaltsogianni in: Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και ὁμιλητικό ἔργο*, 599–610.

All these works are the subject of a book by Kaltsogianni, the only comprehensive study of Zonaras' hagiographical and homiletic production. For this reason, it is worth summarizing below some of Kaltsogianni's principal conclusions. In all works, Zonaras follows patterns and motifs frequently found in saints' biographies, such as the encomium of a saint's parentage, homeland, and upbringing, and the presentation of his miracles. Special features of Zonaras' style in his hagiographical and homiletic works are the insertion of numerous extracts from the Bible and the works of the Church Fathers, and the prominence given to the saints' characters. Kaltsogianni suggests that the *Life of Silvester* and the commentary on Sophronios might predate the *Epitome*,<sup>63</sup> and that Zonaras took extracts from these texts, and inserted them into his chronicle.<sup>64</sup> Either work could have been written prior to or after the retirement of the author to his monastery. The commentary on Cyril, by contrast, appears to have been written after Zonaras' historical account.<sup>65</sup>

Among the hagiographical works by Zonaras, the *Life of Silvester* received the widest dissemination. The text is not transmitted under the name of Zonaras in all manuscripts that preserve it. Kaltsogianni argues in favour of its attribution to the author on the basis of similarities in content, language, and style to other works by him.<sup>66</sup> The writer reworks the proem of the earlier *Life* available to him so as to emphasise the crucial role played by Silvester in the dominance of orthodoxy.<sup>67</sup> A story which makes its appearance in both the *Life of Silvester* and the *Epitome* is the healing and baptism of Constantine the Great by the saint.<sup>68</sup> The most significant divergence from his prototype for the *Life of Eupraxia* is the addition of a proem.<sup>69</sup> In the proem of his work, he focuses on the concept of women's bravery according to the Christian ideology and aims to exalt the saint for resisting the temptations of the flesh.<sup>70</sup>

A striking feature of the commentary on Cyril is the author's analysis of the education of the saint in all major subjects, Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy included.<sup>71</sup> The account of Cyril's contribution to the discussions of the Third Ecumenical Council is repeated almost word for word in the *Epitome*.<sup>72</sup> Just as in the introduction to his canonical interpretation, in the proem of the commentary to Sophronios, too, Zonaras tells us that he was asked to compose this work by other people (whom he does not name).<sup>73</sup> The narrative is structured around two thematic axes: Sophronios' acts prior to and then after his ascent to the patriarchal

<sup>63</sup> Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και όμιλητικό έργο*, 341–3.

<sup>64</sup> Zonaras adapts the passages he draws from his hagiographical works by making minor syntactical and lexical amendments: Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και όμιλητικό έργο*, 466–75.

<sup>65</sup> Kaltsogianni, *Άγιολογικό και όμιλητικό έργο*, 343–5.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–73.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 228–9.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 235–6.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 199, 219.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 199–200.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 278–83.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

throne of Jerusalem.<sup>74</sup> Considerable attention is given to his attempts to solve the theological disputes of his time, a topic which is also treated in Zonaras' chronicle.<sup>75</sup>

In his commentary on the Presentation of Christ to the Temple, Zonaras, as many earlier commentators on the same subject, discusses and interprets the relevant extract found in the Gospel of Luke.<sup>76</sup> He offers an elaborate account not only of the presentation of Jesus to the Temple but also of Simeon's and Anna's prophecies to Mary and Joseph. He considerably expands Simeon's speech to Mary, examining the orthodox theological background of Christ's birth against heretical views that had been expressed and discussing the reactions of Christ's contemporaries who were reluctant to believe His Resurrection.<sup>77</sup> What is interesting in this case is that, as Kaltsogianni implies, Zonaras' expansion and interpretation of this speech reflects his rhetorical training in the progymnasma of *ethopoia*.<sup>78</sup> Finally, in his speech about the Veneration of the Cross, Zonaras breaks away from the tradition of earlier works dedicated to this feast, as his speech is not a panegyric meant to be read out in the third Sunday of the Great Lent, when the Veneration of the Cross was celebrated.<sup>79</sup> In his text, Zonaras lists and elaborates on the reasons why the Church made the decision to commemorate the Veneration of the Cross during the Great Lent.<sup>80</sup>

Having presented in brief some of Kaltsogianni's findings, I would like to concentrate particularly on the commentary on Sophronios of Jerusalem and attempt to place its production within the historical context of twelfth-century Constantinople. After the conquest of the Holy City by the Crusaders and the creation of the Latin Patriarchate in 1099, the Greek patriarchs of Jerusalem appointed by the Byzantine emperor resided in the imperial capital.<sup>81</sup> We know that a patriarch of Jerusalem who was formerly bishop of Tyre and Sidon came to Constantinople in 1107 and dwelt in the monastery of St Diomedes.<sup>82</sup> A decade later, Sabas of Jerusalem, a former bishop of Caesarea, also found himself in the capital.<sup>83</sup> Both patriarchs must have been accompanied by an entourage which would have included other high-level churchmen from areas of Syria and Palestine. In 1157, John Merkouropoulos, initially a monk at Mar Saba, was ordained abbot of St Diomedes and, shortly afterwards, patriarch of Jerusalem.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 265.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 306, 308.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 320.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 321–6.

<sup>81</sup> J. Richard, 'The Eastern Churches', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume IV, c.1024–c.1198. Part. 1*, ed. by D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith (Cambridge, 2004), 564–98, at 573.

<sup>82</sup> This information comes from an anonymous treatise which deals with the transfer of bishops. The text dates approximately to the second half of the twelfth century and has been transmitted in various recensions: 'Le traité', 183 (chapter 55). Jean Darrouzès seems to identify the anonymous patriarch of the treatise with the patriarch John VIII, who, as is known from a seal, was patriarch of Jerusalem towards the end of the eleventh century: V. Laurent, *Le Corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin V.2. L'église* (Paris, 1965), no. 1565.

<sup>83</sup> 'Le traité', 183 (chapter 56).

<sup>84</sup> Spingou, 'John IX'.

He is attested to have taken part in the council of 1157 against Soterichos Panteugenos, which was held in the Blachernai Palace. It was probably during his time in Constantinople that Merkourououlos composed the paired *Life* of John of Damascus and Kosmas of Maiouma.<sup>85</sup>

Zonaras' decision to write about a distinguished figure who had occupied the patriarchal see of Jerusalem in the past should be considered against this background. The presence of the patriarchs of Jerusalem and probably other members of the city's clergy in Constantinople might have fostered a special interest in holy men connected with Jerusalem. Zonaras' commentary on Sophronios and Merkourououlos' double *Life* are examples of this interest. Also, it would seem that the monastery of St Diomedes was a point of congregation for the 'exiled' clergymen of Jerusalem. This may lead to the hypothesis that those who prompted Zonaras to dedicate a work to Sophronios were a group of Syro-Palestinian monks associated with St Diomedes. This, however, cannot be proved. If Kaltsogianni is correct and the commentary on Sophronios was produced prior to the *Epitome*, Merkourououlos could not have been the person who asked Zonaras to compose the text.

### 1.2.3 Ecclesiastical Poetry

A religious poem from the pen of Zonaras that has come down to us is a canon dedicated to the Theotokos.<sup>86</sup> It comprises nine odes, each consisting of three or four *troparia*. However, it omits, as is common, the second ode. The canon is of a strong dogmatic character, condemning all the major heresies in the history of the Church. Each *troparion* (or, less frequently, two consecutive *troparia*) concerns a leading figure whose teachings deviated from orthodox dogma and lapsed into heretical beliefs. Zonaras structures all *troparia* in much the same way: he uses a couple of short sentences to refer to the false teachings of a heresy and then a couple of sentences to explain the corresponding orthodox doctrine.

Special attention should be drawn to the last ode of the canon. The first *troparion* of this ode deals with Leo III, the emperor who launched iconoclasm, and the second *troparion* and the third *troparion* with the Bogomils. What is interesting is the final *troparion* of the ode, which concerns the 'Italians'. Latins became targets of Zonaras' attack because of the doctrine of Filioque and are

<sup>85</sup> Spingou, 'John IX', 197. For the work of Merkourououlos, see A. Kazhdan and S. Gero, 'Kosmas of Jerusalem: A More Critical Approach to His Biography', *BZ*, 82 (1989), 122–32.

<sup>86</sup> John Zonaras, *Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ τοῦ Ζωναρά κανὼν εἰς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον*, ed. by J. B. Cotelerius, *Monumenta ecclesiae graecae*, III (Paris, 1686), 465–72; repr. in *PG*, 135, 413–21. See also Kaltsogianni, *Ἀγιολογικὸ καὶ ὁμιλητικὸ ἔργο*, 33–4.

explicitly characterized by the author as 'heretics'.<sup>87</sup> This characterization is one of the most direct and harshest remarks against Westerners that can be found in Zonaras' oeuvre. A detail worth noting is that this canon was one of the texts added to an edition of the *Horologion* by the printing house of the 'Da Sabbio' family in 1524 in Venice. Due to the fact that Zonaras' canon termed Italians 'heretics', the editors were accused by the Venetian ecclesiastical authorities of printing a text of an anti-Latin character.<sup>88</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Exegeses of Ecclesiastical Poetry

Zonaras composed two commentaries on ecclesiastical poetry. This activity corresponded to a remarkable upsurge of interest in exegeses of religious poetry noted during the twelfth century.<sup>89</sup> Works of this kind were also produced by Gregory Pardos, Neilos Doxopatres, Theodore Prodromos, and Eustathios of Thessalonike.<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, the first of Zonaras' commentaries remains unedited, whereas the second one has been only partly edited. This makes it hard to know the specifics of the works' content and to arrive at a conclusion on the precise date of composition.

The first commentary is an exegesis of the Resurrectional Canons in the *Octoechos*. Zonaras' interpretation of the poem survives in more than fifty manuscripts.<sup>91</sup> The author reveals that he was urged by a certain metropolitan of Thessalonike to continue his own exegesis of the *Octoechos*, as he himself was unable to bring his project to a conclusion.<sup>92</sup> To refer to the said metropolitan, Zonaras uses the pronoun 'ἐκεῖνος', from which one can infer that, by the time

<sup>87</sup> The main issues that caused controversy between East and the West during the twelfth century were the azymes, papal primacy, and the Filioque: T. Kolbaba, 'Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious "Errors": Themes and Changes from 850 to 1350', in *The Crusades*, ed. by Laiou and Mottahedeh, 117–43.

<sup>88</sup> E. Folieri, 'Il libro greco per i greci nelle imprese editoriali romane e veneziane della prima metà del cinquecento', in *Venezia centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (secoli XV–XVI). Aspetti e problemi*, ed. by H.-G. Beck, M. Manoussakas, and A. Pertusi, II (Florence, 1976), 485–508, at 491–8.

<sup>89</sup> See Gregory Pardos, *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Κορίνθου ἐξηγήσεις εἰς τοὺς ἱεροῦς λειτουργικοὺς κανόνας τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ καὶ Κοσμᾶ τοῦ Μελωδοῦ*, ed. by A. Kominis (Munich, 1960), 252.

<sup>90</sup> See the introduction in Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Exegesis*, 53\*–69\*. For Neilos Doxopatres, see also p. 23 (and footnote 100) below.

<sup>91</sup> For an analysis of the text, see Kominis, *Γρηγόριος Πάρδος*, 108–11.

<sup>92</sup> The two segments of the text, from which we learn about the request of the metropolitan of Thessalonike, have been edited by Athanasios Kominis from the codex *Regin. gr. 33*: Kominis, *Γρηγόριος Πάρδος*, 106. The first segment, found in f. 66<sup>v</sup> of the manuscript, reads: 'The man who began this work and produced an exegesis [of the text] up to the *heirmos* of the sixth ode of this *echos*, that blessed metropolitan of the renowned metropolis of Thessalonike, narrated the story of the three children in the seventh ode of the first *echos* [...]' ('Ὁ τοῦ ἔργου τούτου ἀρξάμενος καὶ μέχρι τοῦ εἰρμού τῆς ἕκτης ᾠδῆς τοῦ ἤχου τούτου τὴν ἐξηγήσιν θέμενος, ὁ μακάριος ἐκεῖνος ἀρχιερεὺς τῆς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ περιφανοῦς μητροπόλεως, ἐν τῇ τοῦ πρώτου ἤχου ἐβδόμῃ ᾠδῇ τὴν κατὰ <τοὺς> τρεῖς παῖδας ἱστορίαν ἐξέθετο [...]'). The second extract, in f. 248<sup>v</sup>, is as follows: '[...] for the completion of this work it is not fair to thank me, but that blessed metropolitan who began it and inspired to us the same zeal' ('[...] ὑπὲρ δὲ τῆς τοῦ ἔργου τούτου τελεσιουργίας οὐχ ἡμῖν δικαίως κείσεται χάρις, ἀλλὰ τῷ μακαρίῳ ἐκείνῳ

Zonaras started the composition of the exegesis, the metropolitan had died. The fact that Zonaras offers such specific information about this person indicates that his claim that he was prompted to compose his work by somebody else is probably true. According to the fourteenth-century *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 157 and the *Vind. theol. gr.* 238, a codex dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the name of the metropolitan who started the exegesis was Niketas.<sup>93</sup> This led Kominis to identify him most likely with the well-known theologian Niketas 'of Maroneia', who flourished in the first half of the twelfth century and was bishop of Thessalonike from 1132/3 to 1145, the year of his death.<sup>94</sup> From this, it can be deduced that Zonaras began writing the exegesis of the *Octoechos* after 1145, when he had already been at the Pantanassa monastery for several years.

The work survives in two versions, a longer and a shorter.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, three variant proems have come down to us, one of which is an abridgement of the other two, which are more extensive.<sup>96</sup> The proem which is transmitted in the majority of the work's codices is the only part of the text which has been edited.<sup>97</sup> It is of special value to scholars interested in Byzantine hymnography, as Zonaras lists and elaborates on all the technical features related to the internal structure of a canon, namely the *heirmos*, the ode, and the *troparion*. These are characterized by Zonaras as technical hymnographic terms. He provides long and detailed definitions of them, trying to account for their etymology as well. He also offers a comprehensive definition of the canon as a type of poem and explains its division into odes.

The second exegesis of ecclesiastical poetry produced by Zonaras is that dedicated to the fifty-nine *Gnomic Tetrastichs* of Gregory of Nazianzos. Short parts of the text were edited in the mid-sixteenth century by Zacharias Skordylios.<sup>98</sup> A learned priest from Crete, Skordylios moved to Venice, where he involved himself with writing, the copying of manuscripts, and the publication of religious works.<sup>99</sup> He edited Zonaras' comments alongside those of Neilos Doxopatres on the same work by Gregory. For his edition, however, Skordylios used a manuscript which incorrectly attributes Doxopatres' commentary to

ἀρχιερεὶ τῷ προκαταρξαμένῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸν ὅμοιον παραθήξαντι ζῆλον'). Note the pronoun 'ἐκεῖνος', which makes an appearance in both extracts.

<sup>93</sup> Kominis, *Γρηγόριος Πάρδος*, 106–7.

<sup>94</sup> Kominis, *Γρηγόριος Πάρδος*, 108. For information on Niketas, see A. Kazhdan, 'Niketas "of Maroneia"', *ODB*, III, 1482.

<sup>95</sup> Kominis, *Γρηγόριος Πάρδος*, 110.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>97</sup> The proem was edited for the first time by Angelo Mai: Zonaras, *Ἐξηγήσεις τῶν ἀναστάσιμων κανόνων*. It was later edited by Wilhelm Christ as well: W. Christ, *Über die Bedeutung von Hirnos, Troparion and Kanon in der griechischen Poesie des Mittelalters, erläutert an der Hand einer Schrift des Zonaras, Sitzungsberichte der königlichen Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, II (Munich, 1870), 1–11.

<sup>98</sup> For the edition of the text, see Zonaras, *Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὰ τετραστάχια*.

<sup>99</sup> Information about Zacharias Skordylios can be found in A. Rigo, 'Da Zaccaria Skordylis al Vaticinium Severi et Leonis del 1596', in *Oracula Leonis: tre manoscritti greco-veneziani degli oracoli attribuiti all'imperatore bizantino Leone il Saggio* (Padua, 1988), 73–99.

Niketas David Paphlagon.<sup>100</sup> Hence, his edition bears the title *Interpretation to the Tetrastichs of the Great Father Gregory of Nazianzos, of the Philosopher Niketas also called David* (Νικήτα φιλοσόφου τοῦ καὶ Δαβίδ, ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὰ τετράστιχα τοῦ μεγάλου πατρὸς Γρηγορίου τοῦ Ναζιανζηνοῦ.)<sup>101</sup>

From Zonaras' proem we derive some information about the circumstances surrounding the production of the work. The author apparently produced the commentary late in life, as can be deduced from the reference he makes to his old age.<sup>102</sup> He composed the text at the instigation of somebody else, whom he addresses directly, calling him 'most blessed brother' (μακαριώτατε ἀδελφε').<sup>103</sup> This form of address suggests that this person was a monk. Zonaras further reveals that his commentary was meant as a response to a similar exegesis he had received from this dear friend.<sup>104</sup> These statements strongly suggest that, just as with Zonaras' interpretation of the *Octoechos*, his exegesis on Gregory's *Gnomic Tetrastichs* was indeed composed at the bidding of someone else.

### 1.2.5 The *Lexikon* of (Pseudo-)Zonaras

The *Lexikon* that passes under the name of Zonaras was hugely popular in the Byzantine world, with over 120 extant manuscripts transmitting the work or parts of it.<sup>105</sup> The earliest of these, the *Vat. gr.* 10, dates to 1253.<sup>106</sup> The longest version of the *Lexikon* was edited in 1808 by Johann Tittmann, after whom the work is sometimes called the *Lexikon Tittmannianum*;<sup>107</sup> it contains more than 19,000 glosses. There also exists a second, abridged version of the *Lexikon*.<sup>108</sup> As stated in the title of the longer version, the *Lexikon* takes material from the Old and the New Testaments, as well as from secular works. It draws heavily on earlier lexicographical sources, mainly on the *Lexikon Ambrosianum*, the *Souda*, and the *Etymologica*, but also on those by Oros and Stephanos of Byzantium.

<sup>100</sup> All three authors, Niketas David, Neilos Doxopates, and Zonaras, produced prose commentaries on Gregory's *Gnomic Tetrastichs*: C. Simelidis, 'Lustrous Verse or Expansive Prose? The Anonymous Chapters in the Parisinus Gr. 2750A and Vaticanus Gr. 1898', in *Pour une poétique de Byzance. Hommage à Vassilis Katsaros*, ed. by S. Efthymiadis et al. (Paris, 2015), 273–94, at 277–8.

<sup>101</sup> Looking into the manuscripts that transmit comments ascribed to Zonaras, Friedhelm Lefherz concluded that from the extracts edited by Skordylios under the name of Zonaras, only the proem, the interpretation of the distich at the beginning of Gregory's poem and the exegeses of the first, the ninth, the tenth, and the twentieth distichs were written by Zonaras: F. Lefherz, *Studien zu Gregor von Nazianz. Mythologie. Überlieferung, Scholiasten* (Bonn, 1958), 180–93, particularly at 192–3.

<sup>102</sup> Zonaras, *Ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὰ τετράστιχα*, f. 3, line 7.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 1–2.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, line 23–f. 3<sup>v</sup>, line 6.

<sup>105</sup> For details on the work, see F. Pontani, 'Scholarship in the Byzantine Empire (529–1453)', in *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. by Montanari, Matthaïos and Rengakos, 297–455, at 400; E. Dickey, 'The Sources of Our Knowledge of Ancient Scholarship', in *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. by Montanari, Matthaïos and Rengakos, 459–514, at 474; Hunger, *Literatur*, II, 42–3.

<sup>106</sup> Hunger, *Literatur*, II, 42.

<sup>107</sup> See Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*.

<sup>108</sup> Hunger, *Literatur*, II, 42.



It is supplemented with material from numerous other authors, such as John of Damascus, Michael Psellos, and George Choïroboskos.<sup>109</sup>

The authorship of the work is widely contested. The *Lexikon* is transmitted under the name of Zonaras in only a few manuscripts: the fourteenth-century *Vind. phil. gr.* 154 and *Vind. phil. gr.* 322, the fifteenth-century *Marc. gr.* 492 and the sixteenth-century *Vind. phil. gr.* 32.<sup>110</sup> It is more often ascribed to a certain monk called Antony or is preserved anonymously.<sup>111</sup> As a result, most modern scholars incline to the view that the *Lexikon* was not original to Zonaras.<sup>112</sup> Klaus Alpers, who was the first to study the text thoroughly, set 1204 as the *terminus post quem* for its compilation.<sup>113</sup> He bases his theory on the gloss ‘ἤλεκτρον’, namely amber, the substance ‘from which the holy table of Hagia Sophia was made’ (‘οἷας ἦν κατασκευῆς ἢ τῆς ἁγίας Σοφίας τράπεζα’).<sup>114</sup> What is important here is the use of the imperfect ‘ἦν’, which may indicate that the altar table of the church had been destroyed by the Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade by the time this gloss was written.<sup>115</sup> In the *Souda*, the source from which this excerpt is derived, the verb is in the present tense.<sup>116</sup>

The idea that the *Lexikon* could potentially have come from the pen of Zonaras has been supported by Grigoriadis.<sup>117</sup> Another possibility, in his view, is that the work was compiled by a later scholar, perhaps a member of the Pantanassa monastery, who had access to Zonaras’ writings, and particularly his interpretation of canon law.<sup>118</sup> Grigoriadis’ strongest argument in favour of either view is that several extracts from Zonaras’ canonical commentary show an affinity with entries in the *Lexikon*.<sup>119</sup> He further points out that, as is evident from both the *Epitome* and the exegesis of the canons, Zonaras had a keen interest in

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 43. <sup>110</sup> Alpers, ‘Zonarae Lexicon’, 737; Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, lxxviii–lxx.

<sup>111</sup> Alpers, ‘Zonarae Lexicon’, 737.

<sup>112</sup> This is expressed in the following studies: A. Momigliano, ‘Johannes Zonaras’, in *Who’s Who in the Classical World*, ed. by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (Oxford, 2000), ebook; A. Spanos, ‘Was Innovation Unwanted in Byzantium?’, in *Wanted, Byzantium: The Desire for a Lost Empire*, ed. by I. Nilsson and P. Stephenson (Uppsala, 2014), 43–56, at 47; R. Browning, ‘Lexika’, *ODB*, II, 1221; Alpers, ‘Zonarae Lexicon’, 737–8.

<sup>113</sup> Alpers, ‘Zonarae Lexicon’, 736–7. His opinion is also shared by Hunger: Hunger, *Literatur*, II, 42.

<sup>114</sup> Pseudo-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, I, 986–7.

<sup>115</sup> The destruction of the altar table of the Great Church is attested to by Niketas Choniates, according to whom the table, ‘fashioned from every kind of precious material and fused by fire into one whole’, was smashed to pieces: Choniates, *Historia*, 573.14–7. The translation is that of Harry Magoulias in *City of Byzantium*, 315. A discussion of the metals of which the table of Hagia Sophia was made is found in B. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, 2010), 108.

<sup>116</sup> *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. by A. Adler (Leipzig, 1928–1935), II, 560 (lemma 200); Kaltsogianni, *Ἀγιολογικὸ καὶ ὁμιλητικὸ ἔργον*, 42.

<sup>117</sup> Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 183–208.

<sup>118</sup> Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 189–90.

<sup>119</sup> Kaltsogianni, however, argues that in some cases the affinity between Zonaras’ exegetical work and the *Lexikon* may be due to the fact that both Zonaras and the compiler of the *Lexikon* had access to the same sources, usually either the *Souda* or the writings of Josephus: Kaltsogianni, *Ἀγιολογικὸ καὶ ὁμιλητικὸ ἔργον*, 43.



lexicography. Grigoriadis also draws attention to the fact that the *Lexikon* shares material with John Tzetzes' scholia to Aristophanes. As is the case with Zonaras, the precise period when Tzetzes was active as a scholar is unclear. He must have lived at least up to the early 1160s, with indications showing that he may have been alive as late as 1185.<sup>120</sup> It appears, therefore, that he and Zonaras were near contemporaries and either of the two could have known each other's work.<sup>121</sup>

There can be no safe answer to the question of the authorship of the *Lexikon*. In my view, Grigoriadis offers conclusive evidence that Zonaras' exegesis of canon law shares numerous quotations and entries with the *Lexikon*. What should be borne in mind is that the *Lexikon* is a compilation which alters over time. Hence, there is a shorter version of it. An initial draft of the work might have been produced by a compiler familiar with Zonaras' canonical commentary or even by Zonaras himself. Using this compilation as the basis for their project, later copyists added glosses and expanded it. The one who inserted the term 'ἡλεκτρον' (apparently from the *Souda*) into the *Lexikon* was editing the text after 1204. Examining the work within this framework, the dating of its compilation ranges from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century, the period to which its earliest surviving manuscript is dated.

To sum up, the considerations in the course of this chapter help to draw an initial image of Zonaras. Although mostly known as a chronicler and a canonist, Zonaras was a prolific writer. A survey of his oeuvre shows him to have been a polymath and a man of vibrant scholarly activity. He was an author who exhibited broader interests and tastes, and had a dual focus on both secular and ecclesiastical literature. He had historical, canonical, hagiographical, and exegetical concerns, and was equally keen on composing original works or commentaries on earlier writings. It is also significant that he tried his hand at both prose and verse, which points to his interest in experimenting with the style of his works.

<sup>120</sup> One indication is a poem that has been attributed to Tzetzes about the death of Manuel I Komnenos in 1180; another is a poem of Tzetzes which is thought to refer to the death of Andronikos I Komnenos in 1185: C. Wendel, 'Tzetzes, Johannes', *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, VII A 2 (1948), 1960–5; M. Grünbart, 'Byzantinisches Gelehrtenelend – oder: Wie meistert man seinen Alltag', in *Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. by L.M. Hoffmann and A. Monchizadeh (Wiesbaden, 2005), 413–26, at 424–5. See also E. Cullhed, 'Diving for Pearls and Tzetzes' Death', *BZ*, 108 (2015), 53–62.

<sup>121</sup> I do not agree with Grigoriadis, who, postulating that Tzetzes produced his works during the second half of the twelfth century, believes that this poses a problem for the identification of Zonaras as the compiler of the *Lexikon*: Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 203–4.

## 2

# The Composition of the *Epitome*

Zonaras arranged his material in two different ways. As will be shown below, the first method is the division of the chronicle into volumes, and the second the structuring of the text into broad thematic units.

### 2.1 The Division of the *Epitome* Into Volumes

The modern division of the *Epitome* into eighteen books was made by Ducange. The evidence of the manuscript tradition proves that Zonaras had originally divided his chronicle into two enormous volumes. The first included Jewish, Greek, and early Roman material and extended to the victory of the Roman Republic over Corinth and its allied city states in 146 B.C. The second was devoted to the history of the Roman Empire, starting from the rise to power of the famous Roman general Pompey in c.A.D. 60. Early on in the scholarly investigations of the *Epitome*, Ducange rightly pointed out that, in a great number of manuscripts, the second volume includes various titles which explicitly indicate that the second book of Zonaras' lengthy narrative is beginning.<sup>1</sup> The most characteristic of these can be found in the *Par. gr.* 1715:

This is the second book of John Zonaras. Epitome of histories compiled and composed by the monk John Zonaras. The former book contains the subjects related to Jewish antiquities, Rome and consulships, and this one with the history of the emperors.

βίβλος δευτέρα ἰωάννου τοῦ ζωναρά. ἐπιτομή ἱστοριῶν συλλεγεῖσα καὶ συγγραφεῖσα παρὰ ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ τοῦ ζωναρά. ἡ μὲν προτέρα βίβλος περιέχει τὰ ἑβραϊκὰ καὶ τὰ τῆς ῥώμης καὶ τὰ τῶν ὑπατειῶν, αὕτη δὲ τὰς περὶ τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων ἱστορίας.<sup>2</sup>

Although this title was considered by Pinder to be an interpolation by the hand of the copyist and was, therefore, put into the critical apparatus, such titles can very well reflect the original two-part division of the chronicle.

<sup>1</sup> *Epitome*, I, xiv–xv. See also Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta'; Büttner-Wobst, 'Textgeschichte'.

<sup>2</sup> *Epitome*, II, 298 (the critical apparatus).

As we can see, there is a large chronological gap—of about eighty-six years—between the end of the first volume of the *Epitome* and the beginning of the second. The author himself says that he omitted the period of the Late Roman Republic ‘against his will’ (‘ἄκων’).<sup>3</sup> He was forced to do so because he was not able to find sources dealing with this period. He was apparently missing the relevant books of Cassius Dio’s *Roman History*, one of his major sources for the presentation of Roman history. This part of Dio’s work does not survive either. We do not know whether these books of the *Roman History* had already been lost by the twelfth century or whether they were simply not available to Zonaras. The gap in the sequence of the narrative is a plausible explanation for why the author ended his first volume with the events of 146 B.C.<sup>4</sup>

Leaving this practical reason aside, starting the second volume of the *Epitome* with Pompey may seem odd. Interestingly, another universal chronicle, that by the eight-century author George Synkellos, also starts its second volume with Pompey. A meticulous examination of the tenth-century *Par. gr.* 1764, the oldest manuscript which preserves Synkellos’ text, has convincingly shown that the chronicle was originally divided by the writer into two volumes.<sup>5</sup> The first one ran from the Creation of the world to the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 B.C. The second commenced immediately afterwards, with Pompey’s triumphal return to Rome in the same year, and ended with the rise of Diocletian to the throne in A.D. 284.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to Zonaras’ *Epitome*, there is no chronological gap between the events recounted at the end of the first volume and those at the beginning of the second. Synkellos’ division of the work in this way emphasized the fulfilment of a mythical prediction given by Jacob, namely that when the Incarnation of Christ was approaching, Judaea would no longer be ruled by a Jew. For Synkellos, this prophecy came true with the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans.<sup>7</sup> The example of Synkellos’ chronicle indicates that beginning a volume dedicated to Roman history with Pompey, however unusual, was not unprecedented in the tradition of chronicle writing.

The pattern which emerges from Zonaras’ two-volume division of his chronicle is that the first book focused on Jewish antiquities and pre-imperial Roman history, and the second on imperial history, even if it started with the final years of the Roman Republic. As I will explain in Chapter 5, the political system under Pompey and Julius Caesar, and afterwards under Mark Antony and Augustus,

<sup>3</sup> The part of the text in which Zonaras accounts for the gap in his narrative is found in the *Epitome*, II, 297.9–298.7.

<sup>4</sup> This opinion is also expressed by Treadgold: Treadgold, *Historians*, 393.

<sup>5</sup> J. Torgerson, ‘From the Many, One? The Shared Manuscripts of the *Chronicle* of Theophanes and the *Chronography* of Synkellos’, *TM: Studies in Theophanes*, ed. by M. Jankowiak and F. Montinaro, 19 (2015), 93–117.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

is characterized by the chronicler as a ‘monarchy in disguise.’<sup>8</sup> This period is perceived by Zonaras as a precursor to the ‘genuine monarchy’ established later by Augustus. The two volumes of the *Epitome*, in other words, correspond to pre-imperial and imperial history. The title given to the second volume of the chronicle by the scribe of the *Par. gr.* 1715 supports this view. The scribe writes that the second book contains the history of the Roman emperors, which demonstrates that he clearly understood the second volume to be dealing specifically with imperial history.

## 2.2 The Internal Thematic Structure of the *Epitome*

The division of the chronicle into two volumes is different to its internal thematic structure. In terms of thematic units, Zonaras arranges his chronicle into two broad sections. The first concerns Jewish antiquities, covering Books 1 to 6 in the editions of the work. The second covers Books 7 to 18 and relates the history of the Roman nation.

Zonaras gives his audience a clear idea of the main themes and the general compositional structure of his narrative in the proem of the *Epitome*. The chronicle’s contents take up the entire second half of the proem. Zonaras’ interest in giving a clear outline of the contents of his work is further highlighted by a comparison of the *Epitome*’s proem to the proems of other historical texts. Let us take as examples works on which Zonaras relied for the composition of his account. From the proem of Theophanes’ *Chronographia*, for instance, we learn about the period covered in the text—from the accession of Diocletian to the throne in 284 to the end of the reign of Michael I Rangabe in 813 – and the range of material included in the chronicle, which deals with ‘military or ecclesiastical or civic or popular or of any other kind’ of affairs (‘[πράξις] εἴτε πολεμική, εἴτε ἐκκλησιαστική, εἴτε πολιτική, εἴτε δημόδης, εἴτε τις ἑτέρα’).<sup>9</sup> In the preface to his *Synopsis of Histories*, John Skylitzes is notoriously vague as to the contents of his text. He tells us only that his description will start from the point at which Theophanes ended his *Chronographia*, and that it will provide a brief summary of the history of the Byzantine state.<sup>10</sup> Introducing his *Historia Syntomos*, Michael Psellos states in barest outline that his chronicle will focus on those ‘who reigned in Elder Rome and later in Younger Rome’ (‘τῶν παρὰ τῆ πρεσβυτέρα Ῥώμη βασιλευσάντων καὶ ἀθις τῆ νεωτέρα’), beginning with Romulus, the first king of

<sup>8</sup> See p. 106 of this book.

<sup>9</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 4.17–18. The translation of the segment is contained in *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 4.40–4 (proem).

Rome.<sup>11</sup> Not one of these writers gives the kind of long, detailed overview of the work's contents that we find in Zonaras' proem.

The opening clauses to the contents of Zonaras' text shed light on the reason why he tried so hard to give his audience a good understanding of what was to follow in his narrative. He writes: 'But before my history, I should say in summary what the things are that are going to be narrated, so that the readers of the work may know that they will gain knowledge of many and most indispensable histories' ('*Ἀλλά μοι πρὸ τῆς ἱστορίας κεφαλαιωδέστερον εἰρήσθω τίνα τὰ ἱστορηθησόμενα, ἵν' εἰδεῖεν οἱ τῶ συγγράμματι ἐντευξόμενοι ὡς πολλῶν τε καὶ τούτων ἀναγκαιοτάτων ἱστοριῶν ἐν εἰδήσει γενήσονται*').<sup>12</sup> Looking over the contents, readers can understand that Zonaras' extensive account does not have a narrow thematic focus, but is a work that encompasses a wide variety of subjects. The author, furthermore, wished to show that his narrative comprised two distinct thematic sections, the Jewish and the Roman. Hence, he presents the contents of each section separately.

Summarizing the Jewish contents of the *Epitome* in his proem, Zonaras offers a detailed account of the key events in the history of the people of Israel that will feature in his text.<sup>13</sup> He begins with the story of the ten tribes of Israel and the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V, and then mentions a number of significant historical figures on whom he will focus, such as the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar II, the Persian ruler Cyrus II, the Macedonian Alexander the Great, the king of the Seleucid Empire Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Roman statesman Pompey, and the Jewish king Herod. Most of these figures appear because they played an important role in the history of Jerusalem. The author recalls, for example, the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and later the decree granted to Jews by Cyrus that allowed them to return to the city and restore the Holy Temple.

It is interesting to note, moreover, that Zonaras in his prologue names the major sources he will use for his account of Jewish history. Among these, he acknowledges, are certain Old Testament books: the Octateuch, the Books of Kings, the Books of Chronicles and the Books of Esdras. Additional sources from which he will derive material are the works of Flavius Josephus, the Roman-Jewish historian of the first century AD, whom Zonaras discusses twice in the proem. One observes that the writer prefers to mention sources that are directly related to Jewish antiquities. No reference is made to secondary sources that supplement and extend information supplied by the main sources about other subjects. The works of Herodotus, Plutarch and Xenophon, for instance, from which Zonaras draws rich material for Greek and Persian history, are not cited in his proem.

<sup>11</sup> Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, 2.1–3.

<sup>12</sup> *Epitome*, I, 9.8–11.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.11–12.9.

Zonaras' outline of Jewish antiquities in the proem concludes with a reference to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70. This reference offers the author a convenient way to introduce the subjects recounted in the second section of his work, which is dedicated to the Roman past.<sup>14</sup> This part of the proem provides a detailed overview of the history of Rome, with Zonaras naming significant events and famous individuals, such as Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Augustus, with whom he will deal later in the narrative. The stress is very much on the evolution of the Roman political constitutions—from a kingship, into a tyranny, an aristocracy, a republic, and finally a monarchy.

An important point to note about the manner in which Zonaras presents the contents of the chronicle's Roman section is that he makes an implicit distinction in his account of the Roman nation before and after the reign of Constantine the Great. This distinction is not as sharp and straightforward as that between the Jewish and the Roman contents of the *Epitome*. Still, there is a striking change in Zonaras' presentation of pre- and post-Constantinian history. Up to the period of Constantine, Zonaras gives a very concise overview of the Roman material included in his work. Constantine is the last historical figure who is described in some detail in the contents, with the author highlighting the appearance of the Cross in the heavens to Constantine and the foundation of 'New Rome'. The manner in which he summarizes the post-Constantinian material of his chronicle is substantially different. This extract is worth quoting in full:

[...] and who ruled after him [Constantine I] in Constantinople, what each of them was like in his character, but also in his religious beliefs, and how long he maintained the power, and in what way he left this life. And who was at the head of the Church of Constantinople, and for how long each one was, and who of these adhered to the right doctrine, who supported different doctrines, and in what way each of these followed them. And under which emperors and which patriarchs and against whom the councils were called.

[...] καὶ τίνες μετ' ἐκείνων ἐν αὐτῇ ἐβασίλευσαν, καὶ οἷος ἕκαστος ἦν τοὺς τρόπους, ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὸ σέβας, καὶ ὅσον ἐκράτησε τῆς ἀρχῆς, καὶ ὅπως μετέλλαξε τὴν ζωὴν· τίνες τε τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει προέστησαν ἐκκλησίας, καὶ ἐφ' ὅσον ἕκαστος, καὶ τίνες αὐτῶν τοῦ ὀρθοῦ ἀντείχοντο δόγματος, τίνες δὲ γεγονάσιον ἐτερόδοξοι, καὶ ὅπως τῶν τῆδε μετελήλυθεν ἕκαστος· καὶ ἐπὶ τίνων αὐτοκρατόρων καὶ πατριαρχῶν καὶ κατὰ τίνων αἱ σύνοδοι συγκεκρότηνται.<sup>15</sup>

Here, we see that Zonaras is not nearly as precise in his outline of this part of his work as he was in the overview of the earlier Roman material; he mentions neither the crucial events nor the key historical figures that marked the period

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 12.10–15.9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 15.2–9.

after the reign of Constantine. More than this, Zonaras makes it clear that there will be a shift in the narrative focus. He will move from a narrative of events and renowned individuals in his presentation of pre-Constantinian Roman history to a narrative of biographies in his presentation of the Empire after Constantine. The writer says that he will concentrate on the lives and characters of emperors, and will also relate the history of the patriarchs of Constantinople, discussing mainly those who remained faithful to the orthodox doctrines and those who deviated from them.<sup>16</sup> As will be shown in the next chapter, this turn towards a more personality-centred approach has to do with the biographical style of writing that characterizes the sources exploited by Zonaras for his account of Byzantine history, but also with the author's own literary choices.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the prologue makes it apparent that Zonaras will deal primarily with the new imperial capital, rather than the events throughout the Empire. This underlying distinction between the pre- and post-Constantinian Roman state is highly significant, because it reflects the chronicler's understanding of Roman history. He essentially acknowledges that there is a distinction between the Old Roman Empire, with Rome as its capital, and the New Roman Empire, the 'Byzantine Empire', with Constantinople as its capital.

There are good reasons to think that the extensive proem of the chronicle was one of the last parts written by author. This is suggested by the very detailed presentation of the work's contents in the proem and, more importantly, by the fact that the proem, divided into two parts, echoes the clear-cut division of the Jewish and the Roman material in the main text. It is clear, moreover, that Zonaras' composition of the proem takes into consideration some of the basic features of the main part of his text, namely the focus of the narrative on the development of Rome's political constitutions, and the personality-focused approach to the account of Byzantium.

The sharp division of the *Epitome* into two thematic sections, the Jewish and the Roman, can be seen, apart from in the proem, in the text proper, at the point when Zonaras completes his account of Jewish history.<sup>18</sup> A short paragraph serves as the conclusion of the Jewish section of the *Epitome*. There, Zonaras explains that, with the fall of Jerusalem in Roman hands, the story of the tribulations of the Jews comes to an end. He continues by saying that, under Hadrian, the Jews revolted against the Romans, but were once again defeated and destroyed. He adds that he will relate these events in the corresponding parts of his narrative, obviously in the Roman section that follows.

The next paragraph introduces the theme of Roman antiquities.<sup>19</sup> In this paragraph, the author lists the main subjects he will address in the Roman section of the *Epitome*, namely the origins of the Roman nation, the successful campaigns

<sup>16</sup> Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*, 39.

<sup>18</sup> *Epitome*, I, 561.17–23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 562.1–14.

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 61–3 of this book.

of the Romans to spread their rule all over the world, and the different forms of government that were developed throughout the history of the Empire. Zonaras underlines that his aim in the Roman section will be to teach his readers about the evolution of the Roman political system, a theme which plays a central role in the *Epitome*, as will be explained in Chapter 5.<sup>20</sup> Of great interest is the phrase which opens this paragraph: ‘Since I recalled the history of the Romans [...]’ (‘Ρωμαίων δὲ μνησθείσης τῆς ἱστορίας [...]’).<sup>21</sup> This statement is very similar to the one Zonaras uses in his proem to begin his discussion of the Roman part of the work: ‘Since I recalled the history of the Romans and the history of Rome [...]’ (‘Ρωμαίων δὲ καὶ τῆς Ῥώμης μνησθείσης τῆς ἱστορίας [...]’).<sup>22</sup> It is highly plausible, therefore, that the paragraph which introduced the *Epitome*’s Roman section was composed in the final stages of Zonaras’ writing, more or less at the same time as the proem.

The clear-cut distinction between the Jewish and the Roman section of the *Epitome* is further highlighted if considered in comparison with the way in which Jewish-Roman history is presented in other Byzantine chronicles.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, authors of universal chronicles often attempt to mingle the Jewish with the Roman material in their works in order to form a more cohesive narrative and stress a sense of continuity between the two traditions. Discussing the internal organization of the sixth-century chronicle of John Malalas, Mary Whitby argues that the work is structured into three parts: the first concerns Jewish and Old Testament history (Books 1 to 6), the second Roman antiquities (Books 7 to 12), and the last Byzantium (Books 13 to 18), ‘a scheme that anticipates the chronicle of John Zonaras in the twelfth century.’<sup>24</sup> Malalas, though, incorporates the story of Aeneas, including his adventures and the foundation of Alba Longa, into Book 6, the final book in the Jewish section.<sup>25</sup> Within his account of Aeneas and his descendants, he intertwines short pieces of information about parallel developments in the Jewish and the Greek world.<sup>26</sup> Further, nowhere in Malalas’ narrative do we find authorial statements that explicitly indicate that the Jewish section has come to a close and that a new one featuring Roman antiquities is about to open. The mid-ninth-century chronicle of George the Monk, which begins with the Creation and extends to 867, is also a good example of how a

<sup>20</sup> See pp.101–4 of this book.      <sup>21</sup> *Epitome*, I, 562.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Epitome*, I, 12.10.

<sup>23</sup> R. Fishman-Duker, ‘The Second Temple Period in Byzantine Chronicles’, *Byz*, 47 (1977), 126–56, where special reference to Zonaras is made. In a more recent publication, the same author comments on the image of Jews, as it emerges from Byzantine chronicles: R. Fishman-Duker, ‘Images of Jews in Byzantine Chronicles: A General Survey’, in *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. by R. Bonfil et al. (Leiden, 2012), 777–98.

<sup>24</sup> M. Whitby, ‘The Biblical Past in John Malalas and the Paschal Chronicle’, in *From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron*, ed. by H. Amirav and B. ter Haar Romeny (Leuven, 2007), 279–302, at 286.

<sup>25</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 126–30.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 130–1.



chronicler would arrange his Jewish, Greek, and Roman material into a continuous account. Having discussed the Persian Empire and the Hellenistic kingdoms, George immediately moves to on the history of the Roman Empire, using no concluding paragraph or linking construction.<sup>27</sup> This pattern was copied three centuries later by Michael Glykas, a near-contemporary of Zonaras, whose chronicle also ends with the death of Alexios Komnenos in 1118.<sup>28</sup>

That Zonaras distinguishes in such a straightforward manner the Jewish from the Roman material in his work sets him apart from other authors of universal chronicles. This structural pattern plays down a remarkable ideological feature traditionally ascribed to Byzantine chronicles: that their authors sought to establish the Empire as the fourth kingdom prophesized in the apocalyptic visions of the prophet Daniel and to present its citizens as the rightful heirs to the Jews as God's Chosen People.<sup>29</sup> This concept certainly emerges in the *Epitome*, but is not prominently stressed.<sup>30</sup> Zonaras' account of the Jewish past represents it as largely self-contained. Within a composition of wide scope, the Jewish section clearly has its own theme and also its own concluding paragraph, which signifies to the audience that the long presentation of the history of the people of Israel has finally reached its end. For Zonaras, the story of Israel is a theme worthy of being treated in its own right.

A question pertinent to this discussion is whether Zonaras perceived the idea of composing an ambitious, wide-ranging universal chronicle at the very beginning of his work or whether he developed the final form of his text more gradually. We should not forget, after all, that such a lengthy work must have been created over a considerable period of time.<sup>31</sup> When he took up writing, he already had at his disposal the Bible and the epitome of Josephus' *JA*, the sources that form the backbone of the early parts of his narrative of Jewish antiquities. It is likely, however, that he did not initially have access to Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, the work which provided him with the fundamental structure for his presentation of Roman history up to the early third century AD. An indication of this lack is offered in the third book of the *Epitome*, where Zonaras makes a passing reference to Dio's work. Analysing one of the prophetic visions found in the Book of Daniel, he tells us that the prophet predicted that the fourth great empire, the Roman Empire, would conquer all the lands and nations which had not been conquered by Alexander the Great. Zonaras turns directly to his readers and says that 'whoever is interested in knowing about these historical events

<sup>27</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, I, 293.

<sup>28</sup> Glykas, *Annales*, 379.

<sup>29</sup> Markopoulos, *Η θέση του χρονογράφου*.

<sup>30</sup> See also Matheou, 'City and Sovereignty', 48–9.

<sup>31</sup> In the final lines of the text, Zonaras writes: 'Here, let my writing reach an end and the course of the history, which I very much prolonged, come to an end' ('Ἐνταῦθά μοι τὸ πέρασ ἦτω τῆς συγγραφῆς καὶ ὁ δρόμος στήτω τῆς ἱστορίας, ὅς μοι πρὸς μακρὸν ἐκμεμῆκισται'), signifying both the great amount of text he produced and the great amount of time he had spent on the writing: *Epitome*, III, 768.1–2.

should read the books of Dio, the Roman, and the writings of Polybius' ('ἄπερ ὁ βουλόμενος γινῶναι τὰς βίβλους τοῦ Ῥωμαίου Δίωνος ἀναγνώτω καὶ τὰ τοῦ Πολυβίου συγγράμματα').<sup>32</sup> Here, Zonaras urges his audience to read about the expansion of the Roman Empire, mentioning the sources from which one could derive useful information on the topic. The question which arises is why the chronicler would prompt his readers to seek out Dio's history in order to learn about the rise of the Roman Empire, if he intended to take abundant material from this same source and cover precisely this topic later in his own work.

A parallel observation can be made about Zonaras' reference to another external source. Drawing on Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, the chronicler makes a digression on the life of the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great. Bringing his digression to an end, he states that Herodotus offers a different version of Cyrus' upbringing, life and death. He explains that he is unable to include this material in his chronicle because it would prolong his narrative unduly. Zonaras says: 'Anyone who wishes to know what Herodotus wrote about Cyrus should use his work and will find this information in the first book, which he named after Clio, the first of the Muses' ('ὅτω δ' εἰδέναι βούλημα καὶ ἄπερ Ἡρόδοτος περὶ αὐτοῦ συγγράψατο, τὴν ἐκέκινον μεταχειρισάμενος βίβλον εὐρήσει ταῦτα κατὰ τὸν πρῶτον λόγον, ᾧ τὴν πρῶτην τῶν Μουσῶν ἐπέγραψε τὴν Κλειώ').<sup>33</sup> Here, the writer encourages his readers to read Herodotus' *Histories* because he had no intention of weaving the Cyrus-related material from Herodotus into his own work.

I would suggest that the same explanation applies to the case of Dio. It is plausible that at the time when Zonaras recounted the prophetic visions of Daniel, he had no intention of drawing on Dio's work. He had probably not acquired a copy of Dio by that point and had not yet decided to widen the scope of his chronicle to include the history of Roman Empire. He viewed the expansion of Roman rule as a theme that was then beyond the scope of his text and, therefore, encouraged those interested in the topic to look for an external source. In other words, this early reference to Dio's *History* indicates that the author initially meant to focus on the Jewish past alone. He initiated his project as a book dedicated to Jewish history, in which topics concerning ancient Rome would be treated only in passing. He might even have thought at first that the distant and more recent past of the Byzantine state was adequately discussed by some of the works he had known, such as John Xiphilinos' *Epitome* of Dio, Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos* and *Chronography*.<sup>34</sup> The original conception of his work, however, changed in the course of writing. The key factor that allowed him to

<sup>32</sup> *Epitome*, I, 227.15–16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.8–11.

<sup>34</sup> We know other Byzantine historians, who, too, did not find it necessary to cover a certain period in their works, because this period had already been sufficiently discussed by previous authors. A characteristic example is John Skylitzes, who believed that George Synkellos and his continuator, Theophanes Confessor, gave a substantial account of the period from the Genesis to the early ninth century. Hence, he started his own narrative after that point. See Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 3.6–16 (proem).

expand the subject of his enquiry to include the history of the Romans was the range of sources he gradually managed to collect. It must have been when he managed to get his hands on Dio's history that he considered the possibility of writing about Roman antiquities. This inference is central to our perception and understanding of Zonaras' work as a whole. To put it simply, the *Epitome* should not be viewed as a vast project that was conceived in its final form from the very beginning, but rather as a work in progress which gradually developed into its present form.

One can wonder subsequently why Zonaras initially meant to compose a work focusing on the Jewish past. To answer this question, one should consider how the Byzantines themselves viewed the period prior to and shortly after the Incarnation of Christ. For them, this period was the history of the people of Israel, God's Chosen People. It was part of the early history of Christianity and, consequently, part of their own history. They viewed the story of the people of Israel as part of the Orthodox legacy. The Old Testament, after all, which covered the events of this period, was fully accepted in the Christian world: the Old Testament figures were just as 'Christian' in the Byzantine tradition as those of the New Testament. Therefore, aiming to write about the people of Israel, Zonaras wished to offer his readers an account of early Christian history. In addition, his choice to focus specifically on Byzantium's biblical and early Christian past ties in well with the revival of interest in the study of the biblical text that was noted in the late eleventh century, namely a few decades before Zonaras started composing the *Epitome*.<sup>35</sup> It may also reflect the influence of themes in contemporary public discourse that stressed the links of Byzantium to its early Christian heritage; for example, references to Byzantium as the new Israel and to Constantinople as the new Jerusalem featured prominently in eleventh- and twelfth-century rhetoric.<sup>36</sup>

Zonaras' use of the works of Josephus as his principal sources for this period should not come as a surprise either. Despite being a Jew, Josephus exerted great influence in the Christian world in both the East and the West.<sup>37</sup> The most significant reason for this is that the content of his works supplemented the books of both the Old and the New Testaments. In his *Church History* and *Praeparatio evangelica*, the highly learned Eusebios of Caesarea made abundant use of Josephus. He recognized that his works were valuable witnesses to the history of early Christianity and provided an exegesis of the Old and the New Testament.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> M. Mullett, 'Food for the Spirit and a Light for the Road: Reading the Bible in the *Life of Cyril Phileotes* by Nicholas Kataskepenos', in *Literacy*, ed. by Holmes and Waring, 139–64, at 139.

<sup>36</sup> P. Magdalino and R. Nelson, 'Introduction', in *The Old Testament*, ed. by Magdalino and Nelson, 1–38, at 25.

<sup>37</sup> Kampianaki, 'Perceptions'; J. Carleton Paget, 'Some Observations on Josephus and Christianity', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 52 (2001), 539–624; Schreckenberg, 'Josephus in Early Christian Literature'.

<sup>38</sup> A. Johnson, *Eusebius* (London, 2014), 85–11; A. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio evangelica* (Oxford, 2006), 128–30; Schreckenberg, 'Josephus in Early Christian Literature'.

The employment of Josephus by Eusebios was of crucial importance to the later reception of the historian in Byzantium.<sup>39</sup> For instance, writing his *Bibliotheca* in the ninth century, Photios, the erudite patriarch of Constantinople, offers a detailed summary of the *JA*. He also praises Josephus' literary merits as a historian in his codex concerned with the *Jewish War* (henceforth: *JW*), Josephus' other major historical work.<sup>40</sup> A great number of fragments from Josephus' works are present in the *Excerpta* of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos as well.<sup>41</sup> Josephus was frequently read and used by Byzantine chroniclers; not only Zonara but also George the Monk, George Kedrenos, and Michael Glykas were based, either directly or indirectly, on his compositions. Just as for other Byzantine intellectuals, for Zonaras, too, Josephus was a very reliable—and therefore an obvious—source of information for early Christian history.

To summarize, this chapter showed that Zonaras organized his materials in two volumes (one devoted to Jewish and pre-imperial Roman history, and one to imperial Roman history) and two thematic sections (one related to the Jewish past, and one to the Roman). His account of post-Constantinian Roman history will be centred on the Constantinopolitan environment, placing the emphasis on Byzantine emperors and the patriarchs of the city. The investigation of the structure of the text also demonstrated that the Jewish section of the chronicle is a largely self-contained unit. I suggested that Zonaras' initial aim might have been to produce a work dedicated to Jewish antiquities. Finding more sources as he was writing, the author broadened the subject matter of his text and included the history of the Roman nation.

63–71; Schrekenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*, 79–88. It has been proposed that Eusebios was the author of the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum*, the part of the *JA* (Book 18, chapters 63–4) dedicated to the historical Jesus: K. Olson, 'A Eusebian Reading of the *Testimonium Flavianum*', in *Eusebios of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations*, ed. by A. Johnson and J. Schott (Washington, 2013), 97–114; L. Feldman, 'On the Authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum* Attributed to Josephus', in *New Perspectives on Jewish Christian Relations*, ed. by E. Carlebach and J. Schechter (Leiden, 2012), 14–30.

<sup>39</sup> Studies that deal with or touch upon the use of Josephus' writings by Byzantine scholars are the following: Kampianaki, 'Preliminary Observations'; T. Leoni, 'The Text of the Josephan Corpus. Principal Greek Manuscripts, Ancient Latin Translations, and the Indirect Tradition', in *A Companion to Josephus*, ed. by Chapman and Rodgers, 307–21, particularly at 312; Bowman, 'Josephus in Byzantium'; Schrekenberg, 'Josephus in Early Christian Literature'; Schrekenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition*.

<sup>40</sup> Photios, *Photius. Bibliothèque*, ed. by R. Henry, 8 vols (Paris, 1959–1977), I, 155–8 (codex 76) and 32–3 (codex 47), respectively. For Photios' treatment of Josephus, see J. Schamp, 'Flavius Josephus et Photios', *JÖB*, 32 (1982), 185–96.

<sup>41</sup> Bowman, 'Josephus in Byzantium', 369–70.

## Zonaras' Working Method and Treatment of His Sources

To examine the manner in which the chronicler treats and adapts his source material, I have looked at, separately, the two distinct thematic sections of the *Epitome* that were identified in the previous chapter—the Jewish and the Roman. The first part of the chapter concentrates on the proem of the *Epitome* and the following ones on the sections dedicated to Jewish and Roman history.

### 3.1 The Proem of the *Epitome*

The proem of Zonaras' chronicle, traditionally the part in which an author describes the scope and purposes of his enquiry, is enlightening in many respects. First, it provides an insight into Zonaras' ideas of a flawed historical narrative; second, it reveals the overall purpose of the work; and third, it gives a precise outline of the chronicle's contents and names some of the major sources used by the writer. In his extensive analysis of Zonaras' proem, Grigoriadis compares the literary aspects of the proem to elements we find in the proems of other histories from the middle Byzantine period.<sup>1</sup> Grigoriadis highlights particularly how Zonaras employed and adapted common literary motifs for his own work. More recently, Nicholas Matheou, exploring several aspects of Zonaras' proem, has suggested that the writer might have loosely modelled his proem on the introduction to the chronicle of George the Monk.<sup>2</sup>

Zonaras follows closely the recommendations of Byzantine rhetorical textbooks, the so-called *progymnasmata*, about the purposes of a proem.<sup>3</sup> In the fifth-century *progymnasmata* of Nicholas of Myra, for example, we read that the function and aim of a proem is 'to cultivate the attention, the knowledge and the goodwill' ('τὸ προσοχὴν καὶ ἐμάρθειαν καὶ εὐνοίαν ἐργάσασθαι') of the audience.<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the instructions of Byzantine rhetoricians, Zonaras seeks first

<sup>1</sup> Grigoriadis, 'Prooimion'.

<sup>2</sup> Matheou, 'City and Sovereignty', 44–6.

<sup>3</sup> For the *progymnasmata*, see G. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition Introductory to the Study of Rhetoric* (Atlanta, 2003); R. Webb, 'The Progymnasmata as Practice', in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, ed. by Y. Too (Leiden, 2001), 289–316.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas of Myra, *Nicolai progymnasmata*, ed. by J. Felten (Leipzig, 1913), 4.10–11. For information on Nicholas, see A. Kazhdan, 'Nicholas of Myra', *ODB*, II, 1470.

to gain the attention and goodwill of his readers, and then to inform them about the principal subjects of the *Epitome*.

Indeed, the chronicler is well aware how important it is to win his readers' attention right from the very beginning of his account. For this reason, he starts immediately with a *captatio benevolentiae*. In the first sentence of the proem, he employs an effective rhetorical device: he accepts an accusation that his intended audience might level against him. He admits that his readers would 'rightly' (ἐύστόχως) criticize him for bestowing more importance upon a 'secondary task' (πάρεργον)—that of recording the past—than his monastic duties, with the adverb ἐύστόχως being emphatically placed at the beginning of the sentence to create an impression of humility.<sup>5</sup> To show his modesty, Zonaras explains that he sees his project as a means of atoning to God for his past faults. Trying to secure the goodwill of his audience further, he also tells us that he is not interested in the fine things monastic life has to offer, but would rather devote himself to an arduous task, the composition of a historical work.<sup>6</sup>

The author reveals that he did not take up writing of his own accord. Having noticed that Zonaras was 'at leisure' (σχολλάζοντα), a group of friends, who remain anonymous, urged him to devote his spare time to 'a work of general benefit' (ἔργον κοινωφελές).<sup>7</sup> Claims by writers that they were encouraged by other people to carry out a project are a longstanding literary trope.<sup>8</sup> Statements of a similar kind are made by Zonaras in the proems of the *Exegesis of the holy and sacred canons*, the commentary on Sophronios of Jerusalem and the exegesis of the *Gnomic Tetrastichs* of Gregory of Nazianzos, as well as in the exegesis of the Resurrectional Canons in the *Octoechos*.<sup>9</sup> Zonaras' language is very formulaic, particularly in the *Epitome* and the commentary on Sophronios, where synonymous phrases make their appearance.<sup>10</sup> The fact, however, that it was common for authors to employ such motifs does not necessarily mean that their remarks were not based on real circumstances. Zonaras' claim that he was asked

<sup>5</sup> *Epitome*, I, 3.1–2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.1–6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.7–11, 7.1–3. Another reason why Zonaras made the decision to compose his chronicle was the spiritual benefit he would derive from his accomplishment. About this, however, he says little. He simply explains that, engrossed in writing, he would be spared temptation and not yield to sinful action: *Ibid.*, 7.18–8.5.

<sup>8</sup> See Grigoriadis, 'Prooimion', 340–2. This motif was used by many Byzantine chroniclers and historians. It was exploited, for example, by Theophanes Confessor, who says that the impetus to write his chronicle came from the abbot of his monastery, George Synkellos: Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 4.1–8. Michael Psellos also claims that he was prompted to compose his *Chronography* by a group of high-ranking court officials and churchmen. The *Chronography* lacks a proem. Psellos' statement appears in his narrative of the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos: Psellos, *Chronography*, 116.1–4 (Book 6, chapter 22).

<sup>9</sup> See *Epitome*, I, 4.7–9. Cf. Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, II, 1; Zonaras, 'Υπόμνημα εἰς τὸν Σωφρόνιον', 560.20–1 (chapter 3).

<sup>10</sup> In the proem of both the *Epitome* and the commentary on Sophronios, Zonaras stresses that he did not come up with the idea of composing these texts himself and that he was requested to do so by a third party. The verb ὀρωῶ makes its appearance in both cases.

to produce his chronicle by friends may indicate, to some extent that, although no longer part of the inner circle of the Empire's intellectual life, he was still in contact with a group of literati outside his monastery and engaged with them in scholarly discussions.

Furthermore, presenting his decision to start writing as the granting of the wishes of somebody else was a convenient means for Zonaras to introduce his works without appearing presumptuous to his audience. In the *Epitome*, it also provided him with the narrative context to voice his own opinion as to how a history should be written.<sup>11</sup> The author attributes to his friends a series of critical remarks about earlier historians in terms of the content and style of their accounts. He thus uses his friends as literary personae in a way that allows him to reveal his aesthetic approach to historical works. Zonaras' acquaintances are said to disapprove, first of all, of particularly long narratives, those in which authors deal exhaustively with war and provide information about military strategies, battles, and the geography of battlefields, among other things. They have a negative attitude, moreover, towards those who compose lengthy, rhetorically ornate speeches in order to display their own erudition, as well as those who include numerous dialogues in their narratives to defend and communicate their religious doctrines. This type of material is seen as unnecessarily prolonging historical narratives and possibly as tiring the audience as a result. Zonaras' friends are equally critical of extremely succinct historical accounts because these do not talk 'about the important events' ('περὶ τὰ καίρια') and 'the most important actions' ('τὰς καιριωτέρας τῶν πράξεων') of certain historical figures.<sup>12</sup> Such concision would make it difficult for readers to evaluate the characters of these figures. Other works are rejected due to their poor linguistic qualities, with Zonaras dismissing their style as solecistic and their language as 'ordinary and sometimes even barbaric' ('ἰδιωτικαῖς λέξεσιν [...] ἢ καὶ βαρβάρους ἐνίοτε').<sup>13</sup> The implication that underlies these critical remarks is that the *Epitome* does not exhibit any of the flaws identified in previous historical accounts.

The chronicler is instructed by his acquaintances to produce a 'short history' (' σύντομον ἱστορίαν'), omitting a great many details which would be neither easy to remember nor beneficial to his readers.<sup>14</sup> Zonaras' acquaintances conclude their critique by prompting the chronicler to compose a work 'which will succinctly teach the readers of the text the most important deeds and other circumstances' ('συνοπτικῶς διδάσκουσιν τοὺς ἐπιόντας τὸ σύγγραμμα τὰ καιριώτερα τῶν πεπραγμένων ἢ καὶ ἄλλως συμβεβηκότων'). These guidelines can

<sup>11</sup> For this passage, see *Epitome*, I, 4.11–6.21. The fact that Zonaras expresses his views through the speech of his friends is something that provoked Wilhelm Schmidt's mockery in the 1830s, but was praised as 'innovative' by Grigoriadis more than 150 years later: Schmidt, 'Quellen', iv; Grigoriadis, 'Prooimion', 341.

<sup>12</sup> *Epitome*, I, 6.11–12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.20.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.2–8.



give us an insight into Zonaras' overall purpose in writing his chronicle: to compose a compact historical account, the content of which would be useful to his audience. His project was clearly intended to be a work of general benefit, as he notes earlier in the proem. One important concept that emerges here is that of the public utility of a historical work, which was a commonplace among ancient and medieval historiographers. The use of the verb 'διδάσκω' in the segment quoted above attests to the fact that the *Epitome* was meant to have an edifying character. Zonaras' objective, in other words, was to produce a work of educational value which would be brief and focus only on the most significant facts. The didactic dimension of the *Epitome* is emphasized elsewhere, too, particularly in connection with the author's intention to communicate to his readers the transformation over time of the Roman political system. This subject will be treated extensively in the fifth chapter.<sup>15</sup>

It is remarkable that the emphasis on the didactic purpose of the chronicle goes hand in hand with the concept of brevity. Similar observations about the close connection between the educational character and the synoptic quality of a text have been made in relation to poetry.<sup>16</sup> Writing in verse was considered a form of expression befitting teaching purposes, because 'verse is capable of summarizing ideas in short syntactical units.'<sup>17</sup> To achieve his own didactic goals, however, Zonaras chose to write in prose and, more than that, composed a narrative of enormous length. His idea of brevity is linked to his method of work: he tries to achieve brevity by heavily compressing his sources, as we shall see in the course of this chapter. If viewed in this context, the idea of public utility acquires an additional dimension; instead of studying the primary sources themselves, Zonaras' audience can thumb through the *Epitome* and learn the basics of Jewish and Roman history much more quickly. The chronicle, in other words, is presented by Zonaras as a compendium of history, a source which would be easy for readers to use.

Zonaras' historical compendium has three significant limitations, however, as the author himself acknowledges in his proem. First, he explains that his narrative is not very precise in certain parts due to the obstacles he encountered in the process of collecting and studying his source material.<sup>18</sup> Composing his work at the monastery on the island of St Glykeria, he found it hard to find all the books he needed for his work. Second, he says that the texts he had at his disposal occasionally gave different accounts of the same event. He regrets that he could not record all the versions of a story, but says that this would have made his narrative too long. He adds that he will note the discrepancies between different accounts only when these are crucial to his narrative and could not be left out.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the chronicler accounts for the lack of consistency in terms of the

<sup>15</sup> See pp. 103–4 of this book.

<sup>16</sup> Bernard, *Poetry*, 238–40.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>18</sup> *Epitome*, I, 8.9–14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.14–23.



linguistic style of his text. He explains that he frequently tried to imitate the language of his sources, either by including phrases taken from them or by changing his own style to fit theirs.<sup>20</sup>

In some manuscripts, the proem concludes with a series of theological remarks about the Creation of the world and the human race. This passage does not appear in two of the three manuscripts on which Pinder depended for his edition of Books 1 to 9 of the chronicle, namely the *Par. gr.* 1715 and the *Vind. hist. gr.* 16, but can be found in the *Monac. gr.* 324. For this reason, Pinder regarded the passage as a later interpolation and placed it in brackets.<sup>21</sup> This judgement must be correct because the paragraph contains a paraphrase of some doctrinal observations that are present in Zonaras' narrative of the Creation shortly after.<sup>22</sup> One can reasonably conclude that this paragraph was added by a later copyist who paraphrased an extract from the main text.

### 3.2 The Jewish Section: Books 1 to 6

Zonaras' account of Jewish history comprises approximately a third of the entire *Epitome*. It extends from the Creation of the world to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, a period more or less covered by most Byzantine chronicles.

The most comprehensive investigation into the source material of the first six books of the *Epitome* is offered by two nineteenth-century studies, both of which remain very useful. In his work of 1839, Schmidt provided a thorough analysis of all the known sources employed by Zonaras to the end of Book 12.<sup>23</sup> The sources identified by Schmidt for Books 1 to 6, in particular, are: the Old Testament; Josephus' *JA* and *JW*; Eusebios of Caesarea's *Church History*; Theodoret of Cyrillus' *Commentary on Daniel*; Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*; Herodotus' *Histories*; and Plutarch's *Life of Artaxerxes* and *Life of Alexander*. Most of Schmidt's findings were confirmed in an equally detailed study by Büttner-Wobst in 1890.<sup>24</sup>

It is clear that the chronicler derives the greatest amount of material for his presentation of the Jewish past from the *JA* (through a Byzantine epitome).<sup>25</sup> Consisting of twenty books, Josephus' magnum opus is a very long work. It begins with the biblical Creation and ends in AD 66, just before the onset of the Roman-Jewish War.<sup>26</sup> The epitome of *JA*, which was employed by Zonaras, is about a third

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.23–9.7.      <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.16–16.11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.4–11.      <sup>23</sup> Schmidt, 'Quellen'.

<sup>24</sup> Büttner-Wobst, 'Abhängigkeit'.      <sup>25</sup> See p. 11 (footnote 33) of this book.

<sup>26</sup> The secondary literature on Josephus is abundant. Some relatively recent publications are the following: *A Companion to Josephus*, ed. by Chapman and Rodgers; *Flavius Josephus: Interpretation and History*, ed. by J. Pastor, P. Stern, and M. Mor (Leiden, 2011); *Josephus and the Flavian Rome*, ed. by J. Edmondson and S. Mason (Oxford, 2005); *Josephus, the Bible*, ed. by Feldman and Hata.

shorter than the original Josephan text. The corresponding section of Zonaras' chronicle is about half of the length of this epitome and, consequently, about a sixth of the length of the *JA*. As I discussed on another occasion,<sup>27</sup> the epitome of the *JA*, accurately follows Josephus' division of his material into twenty books. The anonymous author of the epitome provides a summary of Josephus' narrative, copying faithfully both the content and the language of his source. He even uses the first-person singular and first-person plural in cases where Josephus does so, and repeats almost word for word the preface and the epilogue of the *JA*. The chronicler, in other words, had a faithful abridgement of the *JA* at his disposal. Large portions of his source are usually summarized, paraphrased or, less frequently, copied almost verbatim into Zonaras' account. Steven Bowman highlights, however, that the chronicler omitted much of the literary, philosophical, and documentary material included in the *JA* (and the epitome).<sup>28</sup> There can be no doubt that the *Epitome* owes much to the narrative structure of Josephus' work. Not only does the chronicler use individual episodes included in the *JA* (and the epitome), but he also follows very closely the sequence of events found there to build the main spine of his own narrative. A brief overview of the narrative structure of the Jewish section of the *Epitome* demonstrates this.

Zonaras opens his main text with a few lines dedicated to Christian doctrine concerning the nature of God.<sup>29</sup> He then moves on to describe the period from the Creation to the death of Saul. The sequence of events follows that of the *JA* (Books 1 to 6) and the first nine Old Testament books (from Genesis to Samuel 1). Afterwards, special emphasis is given to David's reign. The narrative from that point on is organized chronologically according to reigns in a fashion similar to that of the *JA* (from Book 7 to Book 10, chapter 144) and the biblical Samuel 2, Kings 1, 2 and Chronicles 1, 2. For the events following the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 579 BC, Josephus incorporates a large amount of material from the biblical book of Daniel into his composition. Remaining close to the narrative sequence of the *JA*, Zonaras moves on to relate the apocalyptic visions of the prophet Daniel, deriving material mainly from Josephus and Theodoret's *Commentary on Daniel*. After this, for the first time in his narrative, Zonaras stops using Josephus and relates the stories of Judith and Tobit, heavily abridging the biblical books devoted to them. Resuming the use of the *JA*, he turns the focus of his narrative to Persian history. Zonaras' presentation of the life of Cyrus the Great is essentially a summary of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. Drawing on Josephan material yet again, Zonaras deals next with Cyrus' successors Cambyses II, Darius I,

<sup>27</sup> A short discussion of the features of this epitome and the reasons why it must have been a useful source to Zonaras is found in: Kampianaki, 'Preliminary Observations', 212–16.

<sup>28</sup> Bowman, 'Josephus in Byzantium', 371.

<sup>29</sup> *Epitome*, I, 17.1–12.

Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I. Abridging Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, he then relates the military successes of Alexander the Great. Moving on to the Hellenistic period, he uses the *JA* as his major source. He maintains the narrative focus of Josephus' text and is primarily concerned with the Ptolemaic kingdom and the Seleucid Empire. The selection and order of episodes towards the end of the chronicle's Jewish section follow that of the *JA* and later the *JW*, to which Zonaras also had access (either directly or through an intermediary source).<sup>30</sup> Much emphasis is given by the author to the rule of Herod the Great and the rule of his successors. Next, Zonaras proceeds to an account of the events that led to the Jewish revolt against the Romans, and subsequently to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem. From that point onwards, the writer heavily abridges Books 3 to 7 of the *JW*. The corresponding section of Zonaras' chronicle is about a seventh of the size of Books 3 to 7 of the *JW*. The chronicler does not find it necessary to derive material from the first couple of books of the *JW*, as these offer a summary of information included in the *JA*. The *JW* is essentially the only source which Zonaras consults in the last part of the chronicle's Jewish section, as, unlike earlier in his presentation of the Jewish past, he is not mixing Josephan material with relevant information from other texts. Apart from this difference observed in the sections of the chronicle which draw on Josephus' works, there is no noticeable difference in the way Zonaras handles and excerpts the *JW* and the epitome of the *JA*.

Zonaras makes repeated references to Josephus to highlight the chronicle's close connection to his works; a search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* shows that Josephus is the most frequently cited author in the *Epitome*, with Zonaras referring to the writer by name on more than fifty occasions. On this evidence, it seems that the chronicler's aim was not simply to acknowledge the principal source from which the Jewish material of his work derives, but, more importantly, to establish in the eyes of his readers the strong dependence of his chronicle on Josephus' works. This betrays not only Zonaras' own appreciation of Josephus as a historian but also that of his contemporary audience.

It is no coincidence that in cases when the author wishes to enhance or confirm the veracity of what he says, he employs lengthy word-for-word quotations from the epitome of the *JA*. This can be seen, for instance, in Zonaras' conclusion of the biblical story of Noah. The writer remarks that Noah died at the age of 950.<sup>31</sup> To address the doubts his readers might have about Noah's longevity, he quotes verbatim an extensive passage from his source, which explains why Noah enjoyed

<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that an epitome of the *JW* is not known to us nowadays, although this does not mean that such a text never existed. For a general introduction on the *JW*, see S. Mason, 'Josephus' *Judean War*, in *A Companion to Josephus*, ed. by Chapman and Rodgers, 13–35; *The Jewish War*, trans. into English by G. A. Williamson, rev. ed. with a new introduction by M. Smallwood (Harmondsworth, 1989), 9–24.

<sup>31</sup> *Epitome*, I, 28.18–9. Cf. Josephus, *JA*, I, 24 (Book 1, chapter 105).

such a long life. Similarly, in his account of the execution of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas, Zonaras inserts into his text an extract of approximately twelve lines taken from the epitome of the *JA* in support of his claim that some Jewish people attributed Herod's military defeat by Aretas IV Philopatris to his hideous crime.<sup>32</sup> Evidently, for Zonaras, the use of Josephus as a source added importance, authority, and appeal to his account.

Some of the Old Testament material present in the chronicle was transmitted to the text via the works of Josephus, who himself drew extensively on the biblical text.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, Zonaras augmented his main source with much information taken directly from the Old Testament. He explicitly acknowledges Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and the Kings as his sources.<sup>34</sup> It is apparent, moreover, that he derived some material from the books of Numbers, Chronicles, Judith, and Tobit. Zonaras followed the Septuagint corpus alone. Like several of his fellow chroniclers, he is aware of the content of the book of Jubilees, one of the Jewish-Christian texts that are nowadays characterized as *pseudepigrapha*, but questions its validity.<sup>35</sup> His negative opinion of the text is clearly laid out at the beginning of his narrative of the Creation, when he emphatically states that: 'I [Zonaras] do not regard anything written there as certain, neither do I weave (such material) into my account' (οὐδέν τι τῶν ἐν ἐκείνῃ γεγραμμένων λογίζομαι βέβαιον, οὐδὲ τῷ λόγῳ συντίθεμαι).<sup>36</sup> Since the Jubilees does not count among the writings that were approved by the Church, Zonaras considered the work an unreliable source of information, and one which should not be used in his narrative. However, echoes of the Jubilees can in fact be found in the *Epitome*. Zonaras ignores the fact that Josephus, his principal authority, interpolated items of information from the Jubilees into the *JA*.<sup>37</sup> As a simple indication of this, following Josephus, Zonaras gives the name of the

<sup>32</sup> *Epitome*, I, 485.21–486.12. Cf. Josephus, *JA*, IV, 161–2 (Book 18, chapters 117–19).

<sup>33</sup> Josephus heavily exploited the Hebrew biblical text and had also access to Greek translations of the Bible: P. Spilsbury, 'Josephus and the Bible', in *A Companion to Josephus*, ed. by Chapman and Rodgers, 123–34, at 128; T. Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford, 2009), 252; E. Ulrich, 'Josephus' Biblical Texts for the Books of Samuel', in *Josephus, the Bible*, ed. by Feldman and Hata, 81–96.

<sup>34</sup> For example, see *Epitome*, I, 21.2, 42.16, 55.14–5, 59.18, 69.19–20, 70.6–7, 75.12 and 75.20–1, 150.23 and 194.8–9.

<sup>35</sup> The Jubilees was originally written in Hebrew and was later translated into Greek, Latin, Ethiopic, and perhaps Syriac. Only brief excerpts of the Greek translation survive; they can be found mainly in the compositions of the fourth-century Epiphanius of Salamis and those of the Byzantine chroniclers George the Synkellos, George Kedrenos, and Michael Glykas. The citations found in these works have been used by James VanderKam for his edition of the Ethiopic Jubilees: see *The Book of Jubilees*, I, ix, xi–xii; II, xi–xiv.

<sup>36</sup> *Epitome*, I, 18.8–10. For the ambivalent attitude of Byzantine chroniclers towards the Jubilees, see E. Jeffreys, 'Old Testament "History" and the Byzantine Chronicle', in *The Old Testament*, ed. by Magdalino and Nelson, 153–74, at 156–7, 163; *The Chronography of George Synkellos*, liv–lv, lxi–lxii.

<sup>37</sup> See *The Chronography of George Synkellos*, liv–lv (footnote 119), lxi. For some examples that reflect Josephus' use of the Jubilees, see J. Kugel, *A Walk Through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of Its Creation* (Leiden, 2012), 42, 98, 191–3; T. Franxman, *Genesis and the Jewish Antiquities of Flavius Josephus* (Rome, 1979), 79, 98, 101–2, 108, 115, 283.

daughter of Pharaoh who saved the infant Moses as Tarmuth ('*Θέρμουθις*'), a name that does not appear in any other source prior to Josephus, apart from the Jubilees.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, the chronicler occasionally compares short pieces of information collected from the books of the Old Testament and the *JA*, although the two sources do not present substantial differences. He closely examines the texts and indicates slight differences between the descriptions of a certain place or a certain event. To take an example, he draws a detailed comparison between the description of the Holy Temple of Solomon in the *JA* and the description in the Kings. He records the points on which the two accounts agree or disagree, and provides accurate references to the sections of his sources where this material is included.<sup>39</sup> In other cases, he points out that an item of information contained in the biblical text is omitted by Josephus or that a certain passage of the Old Testament offers a more reliable account than the corresponding section of the *JA*.<sup>40</sup> It is remarkable, moreover, that he pays considerable attention to the different terms or the different names given by his sources. He underlines, for instance, that 'the tree of knowledge' ('*ξύλον τῆς γνώσεως*') mentioned in Genesis is called the tree 'of judgment' ('*τῆς φρονήσεως*') by Josephus.<sup>41</sup>

The emphasis Zonaras places on trivial differences between the *JA* and the Old Testament is not in line with the author's statement in the proem, namely that points on which his sources contradict one another will feature in his text only if they are crucial to the coherence of the narrative. The writer deviates from his intended practice to emphasize that he is drawing very carefully on source texts and that he is striving to compose an accurate account of the history of the people of Israel. As Roger Scott has argued, chroniclers 'often use repetition and apparent plagiarism as a way of demonstrating their authenticity and accuracy'.<sup>42</sup>

On certain occasions, the chronicler deliberately deviates from the narrative of his sources to introduce several pieces of extraneous information in the form of digressions. Zonaras introduces the biblical stories of Judith and Tobit as a brief excursus from the narrative of Josephus.<sup>43</sup> Since the books of Judith and Tobit are not among those of the Jewish Torah, they were left out by Josephus. Zonaras might have found this omission odd; he considers these stories edifying and includes them in his text. A longer part of the narrative which is also presented as a self-contained, parenthetical unit is the one dedicated to Alexander the Great.

<sup>38</sup> *Epitome*, I, 53.8. Cf. Josephus, *JA*, I, 129 (Book 2, chapter 224) and *The Book of Jubilees*, II, 47.5.

<sup>39</sup> *Epitome*, I, 146.16–147.5.      <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.15–6, 55.15.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.19–20. For other examples, see *Ibid.*, 59.18–21, cf. Exodus 15.23; *Epitome*, 69.18–19, cf. Numbers 17.23. A close comparison such as this can also be seen in Zonaras' treatment of Xenophon and Herodotus. According to Zonaras, the former states that Cambyses' brother was named Tanaoxares, while the latter was called Smerdis: *Epitome*, I, 305.9–10.

<sup>42</sup> R. Scott, 'Text and Context in Byzantine Historiography', in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. by James, 251–63, at 252.

<sup>43</sup> *Epitome*, I, 247.1–260.15.

This can be seen in the opening sentences of the passage, where the author explains to his readers that he will pause his presentation of the Jewish past to relate the life and achievements of the illustrious Macedonian king.<sup>44</sup> Zonaras' intention behind this digression is to enrich his narrative with information from Plutarch's *Alexander*. These examples highlight that, when the writer had access to sources that furnished a new store of material, he would systematically mix this material with information from the works that formed the backbone of his text. Even when the information he had at his disposal was not directly connected to the main narrative line, he was determined to include it in his composition.

One can occasionally discern his efforts to draw together the different subjects of his account. An indication of this is provided by the transitional paragraph that follows the story of Tobit and enables Zonaras to smoothly integrate into his text a great amount of material from the *Cyropaedia*.<sup>45</sup> In this paragraph, the author briefly recapitulates an episode he recounted earlier in his narrative—the captivity of the Jewish people by the Assyrians (in the mid-eighth century BC) and Jeremiah's apocalyptic prophecy about the destruction of the Assyrian kingdom—and then introduces the topic with which he will deal shortly afterwards, the history of the Persian Empire. He claims that the reason why he wishes to recount the history of the Persians is because it will eventually prove the reliability of Jeremiah's prophecy. Indeed, as Zonaras narrates later, it was the Persian ruler Cyrus the Great who destroyed the Assyrian rulership.<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that this pattern of connection is not a result of Josephus' influence on Zonaras, since in the corresponding section of the *JA*, the Jewish historian moves directly from the story of Daniel to the presentation of the Persian past.

### 3.3 The Roman Section: Books 7 to 18

#### 3.3.1 Pre-Constantinian Roman History: Books 7 to 12

In Pinder and Büttner-Wobst's three-volume edition of the chronicle, the section which concerns pre-Constantinian Roman history covers the entire second volume, representing more than 620 pages of printed text. For his narrative up to the reign of Nerva, Zonaras is based on one principal source: the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio, a voluminous work which consisted of eighty books and extended

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 329.9–12: 'Now that the account of history made mention of Alexander, it is good to narrate in brief his deeds and dispositions, and from which place and from whom he was born, and then once again to bring back the account to its continuation' ('Ἐπεὶ δὲ μνείαν τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου ὁ τῆς ἱστορίας λόγος πεποιήται, καλὸν καὶ τούτου τὰς πράξεις τε καὶ τὰ ἦθη καὶ ὄθεν καὶ τίνων ἔφην κατ' ἐπιδρομὴν διηγήσασθαι, καὶ οὕτως αὐθις ἐπαναγαγεῖν τὸν λόγον πρὸς τὴν συνέχειαν').

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 260.16–261.3.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 303.12–13.

from the foundation of Rome to AD 229.<sup>47</sup> Dio's work has not come down to us intact. Books 22 to 35 have been almost entirely lost, while Books 55 to 60 and 79 to 80 have been preserved only in fragments. Zonaras, though, had more of the text at his disposal, though he too lacked the books that dealt with the late Republican period. Due to the chronicler's strong dependence on Dio, the *Epitome*—along with the *Excerpta* of Constantine Porphyrogenetos and John Xiphilinos' *Epitome* of Dio—has been used by scholars to reconstruct the lost books of Dio's work.

The chronicler supplements Dio's history with a good deal of information from Plutarch's *Lives* of renowned mythological and historical figures of Rome: Romulus, Numa, Publicola, Camillus, Aemilius Paulus, Pompey, Caesar, Brutus, and Antony. In addition, Zonaras occasionally consulted Xiphilinos, who epitomized Books 36 to 80 of Dio's work.<sup>48</sup> The section from the reign of Trajan to that of Alexander Severus seems to be based primarily on Xiphilinos' narrative, although Zonaras must have been reading Dio's text at the same time.<sup>49</sup> From that point on, it is very hard to identify the principal sources which underpin the chronicle. It has been argued that the author heavily depends on Dio's Anonymous Continuator and John of Antioch, and that he also employs the works of Theodor Lector, Appian, and Philostratus, among other writers.<sup>50</sup> Evidently, the chief work on which he relies for Church affairs is Eusebios of Caesarea's *Church History*.

<sup>47</sup> A very helpful introduction to Dio and his work can be found in Swan, *The Augustan Succession*, 1–38. For a comprehensive study of the special features of Dio's narrative, see A. Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire Under the Severans: Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian* (Cambridge, 2014), 90–149.

<sup>48</sup> Büttner-Wobst, 'Abhängigkeit', 155–9; Schmidt, 'Quellen', xlii.

<sup>49</sup> Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*, 76–7; U. Boissevain, 'Zonaras' Quelle für die Römische Kaisergeschichte von Nerva bis Severus Alexander', *Hermes*, 26 (1891), 440–52; Büttner-Wobst, 'Abhängigkeit', 163–8.

<sup>50</sup> The sources used by Zonaras after Dio have been the cause of much debate among early and recent commentators on the *Epitome*. The fragments of Dio's Anonymous Continuator have been edited by K. Müller in the *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, IV (Paris, 1868), 191–9. For Zonaras' relation to Dio's Continuator, see Patzig, 'Zonaras I'; Büttner-Wobst, 'Abhängigkeit', 168; Schmidt, 'Quellen', l–lii. Carl de Boor identified Dio's Anonymous Continuator with Peter the Patrician, although modern scholars have expressed serious doubts about this identification: see C. de Boor, 'Römische Kaisergeschichte in byzantinischer Fassung. I. Der Anonymous post Dionem', *BZ*, 1 (1892), 21–31; Cameron, *The Last Pagans*, 659; M. R. Cataudella, 'Historiography in the East', in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, ed. by G. Marasco (Leiden, 2003), 391–447, at 437–40; D. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford, 1990), 395–7. Two editions containing fragments attributed to John of Antioch have come out in the last few years: John of Antioch, *Ioannis Antiocheni fragmenta quae supersunt omnia*, ed. by S. Mariev (Berlin, 2008), which excludes the majority of the so-called Salmasian fragments, and John of Antioch, *Ioannis Antiocheni fragmenta ex historia chronica*, ed. by U. Roberto (Berlin, 2005). For a discussion of the methodology followed by the two editors, see P. Van Nuffelen, 'John of Antioch, Inflated and Deflated. Or: How (not) to Collect Fragments of Early Byzantine Historians', *Byz*, 82 (2013), 437–50. For Zonaras' use of John of Antioch, see M. Dimas, 'The Antiochene Connection: Zonaras, Ammianus Marcellinus, and John of Antioch on the Reigns of the Emperors Constantius II and Julian', *Byz*, 50 (1980), 158–85; E. Patzig, 'Die römischen Quellen des salmasischen Johannes Antiochenus', *BZ*, 13 (1904), 13–50. See also Treadgold, *Historians*, 394–5.



The legend of Aeneas, the refugee from Troy who became the founder of the Roman nation, serves as the starting point for Zonaras' account of Roman history. Showing no interest at all in Aeneas' Greek-Trojan background, the author tells us only of the hero's adventures in Italy and the foundation of the city of Alba Longa.<sup>51</sup> He soon moves on to present the story of Romulus and Remus, to whom he pays considerably more attention. He then recounts the history of the first kings of Rome and the events that led to the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the Roman Republic. As the narrative goes on, the author focuses on Roman military campaigns, with great emphasis being given to the First and the Second Punic Wars, as well as the later wars against Macedonia and Carthage. Forced by his lack of access to the relevant books of Dio to skip the period from 146 BC (the destruction of Carthage and the battle of Corinth) to the Late Roman Republic, he continues by giving an account of the First and Second Triumvirate, and a comparatively long and detailed description of the reign of Augustus. From that point on, Zonaras records the key events that marked the reign of each Roman emperor.

As can be observed from this overview of the text's Roman section, the structural organization of the narrative is chronological. The author closely follows Dio and builds his narration according to the chronological scheme of his principal source.<sup>52</sup> When his exemplar refers to certain individuals or events, Zonaras embeds in his narrative information on these taken from the other sources he had at his disposal. Like Dio, Zonaras organizes his description of the early kings of Rome and the world of imperial Rome into units by reign. As a rule, material about ecclesiastical history—almost always drawn from Eusebios—is presented in separate sections, which are in most cases placed towards the end of the unit dedicated to an emperor. As he concludes his presentation of the age of Augustus, for example, Zonaras talks about the birth of Christ, which occurred during his reign.<sup>53</sup> Later on, he ends his narrative of the emperor Tiberius by recording the baptism of Christ.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, two paragraphs containing material from Eusebios are found at the very end of the section on Trajan's rule.<sup>55</sup>

Dio combines the chronological order of his material according to reigns with one according to consulships, but Zonaras shows little interest in following this division. The Roman historian is diligent in assigning the events he describes to the years of particular consuls,<sup>56</sup> while Zonaras follows this practice less

<sup>51</sup> Jeffreys, 'Attitudes', 234.

<sup>52</sup> For Zonaras' treatment of Cassius Dio, see B. Bleckmann, *Die römische Nobilität im Ersten Punischen Krieg: Untersuchungen zur aristokratischen Konkurrenz in der Republik* (Berlin, 2002), 35. See also Fromentin, 'Zonaras abrégiateur'; Urso, 'The Origin'; Simons, *Cassius Dio*; Swan, *The Augustan Succession*.

<sup>53</sup> *Epitome*, II, 431.12–432.21.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 445.15–446.16.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 513.5–514.22.

<sup>56</sup> Millar, *Study*, 39–40.



systematically. We frequently see that he does not report under whose consulship a series of events took place, although the names of the consuls make their appearance in the corresponding sections of his source. Dio says, for instance, that the emperor Tiberius died during the consulships of Gnaeus Proculus and Pontius Nigrinus.<sup>57</sup> Passing over his source's reference to the consuls, Zonaras states that the emperor fell ill and died on 20 March.<sup>58</sup> Having specified the date of Tiberius' death, it appears the chronicler thought that information about the consuls was inessential and would add nothing to his narrative. For a twelfth-century author, the sequence of consular years was not as relevant as it was for a historian who lived in a period when the consular office was still a notable feature of government, rather than a palace honorific. Further, Zonaras' contemporary readers would not have been able to understand when an event actually took place if it were registered simply within the chronological framework of consular years.

Unlike Xiphilinos, who remains faithful to the wording of his source, Zonaras does not usually transcribe Dio's account word for word. He is inclined to heavily summarize, or omit altogether, numerous sections of Dio's text. A meta-historical statement that clearly denotes this process of abridgement is his remark that certain events are not worthy of being recorded and, as a result, have no place in his historical work: 'In the years following these, some events took place, but it is not at all necessary to regard them as worthy of being written down' (*Ἐν δὲ τοῖς μετὰ ταῦτα χρόνοις συνηνέχθησαν μὲν τινα, οὐ μέντοι καὶ ἀναγκαῖα πάνυ ὥστε καὶ συγγραφῆς νομιζέσθαι ἄξια*).<sup>59</sup> A comparison between the *Epitome* and Dio's text shows that Zonaras' is a much more event-focused account than the Roman historians'. As the chronicler indicates in the proem of the *Epitome*, his aim was to produce a succinct piece of writing and emphasize primarily the most significant historical events. Indeed, he focuses on the truly 'historical' data found in Dio and does not let this kind of information become clouded by other material that would prolong and complicate the narrative. This is the appropriate context in which one should view Zonaras' systematic practice of excluding the bulk of philosophical material contained in Dio's work from his text. The Roman historian fills his narrative with generic remarks about human life.<sup>60</sup> Most statements of this kind are omitted altogether by Zonaras. The majority of Dio's fragments that have been preserved in the sacro-profane gnomology of

<sup>57</sup> Dio, *History*, II, 613–14 (Book 58.26–27).

<sup>58</sup> *Epitome*, II, 444.12 and 445.3. It should be noted that, most likely out of haste, the chronicler does not copy the date he found in his source correctly. According to Dio, Tiberius died on 26 March.

<sup>59</sup> *Epitome*, II, 268.13–4. See also a similar statement in *Epitome*, II, 161.3–4: 'After that, there came several consuls, but they did not achieve anything worthy of being related' (*Ἐκτοτε δὲ διάφοροι μὲν ὑπάτευσαν, οὐδὲν δὲ ἱστορίας ἔπραξαν ἄξιον*).

<sup>60</sup> For example, see Dio, *History*, I, 11–12 (fragments 5.12–3), 33 (fragments 12.2–3), 52 (fragment 18.2), 96 (fragment 36.4), 313–14 (fragments 70.2–3).

Pseudo-Maximos Confessor cannot be found in the chronicle. Similarly, the author prefers to leave out passages that echo Dio's political thinking.

The lengthy speeches attributed by the Roman historian to significant historical figures have no place in the *Epitome* either. The speeches of Antony and Augustus prior to the Battle of Actium, for instance, are conspicuously absent from the chronicle.<sup>61</sup> Two speeches of Cicero that extend to several pages in U. Boissvain's edition of Dio are each summarized by Zonaras in no more than six lines of printed text.<sup>62</sup> The speeches of Fabricius directed at Pyrrhus, of Antony against the amnesty for Caesar's assassins, and of Livia Drusilla addressed to Augustus are present but are also heavily abridged by the chronicler.<sup>63</sup> The omission and abbreviation of Dio's speeches chimes neatly with the critical remarks attributed to Zonaras' friends in the proem about historians who 'compose their works to show off, displaying their capacity to write, and for this reason intersperse their writings with speeches' ('τοῖς δὲ καὶ πρὸς ἐπίδειξιν συντέθινται τὰ συγγράμματα, ἐπιδεικνυμένοι ὅπως εἶχον περὶ τὸ γράφειν δυνάμεως').<sup>64</sup> Through the persona of his friends, Zonaras expresses his own distaste for lengthy speeches.<sup>65</sup> A further reason that explains why the author chose to leave out or condense long speeches in his source has to do with the fact that he is writing a chronicle; long pieces of direct speech were not common in the literary tradition of chronicle writing, in contrast to the tradition of classicizing histories.

Just as he does with Dio's work, Zonaras omits or heavily abbreviates various passages of Plutarch, his second major source for Roman history, trying nevertheless to retain essential data.<sup>66</sup> He swiftly passes over or leaves out of his text minor episodes that do not greatly affect the course of the narrative. It is evident that he does not have much taste for the poetical quotations that are scattered throughout the *Lives*. Indeed, he omits all quotations (aside from one attributed to Sophocles).<sup>67</sup> Importantly, a large bulk of the information that was

<sup>61</sup> Dio, *History*, II, 336–46 (Book 50.16–30); cf. *Epitome*, II, 395.5–399.2, in which the author discusses the battle.

<sup>62</sup> Dio, *History*, II, 118–25 (Book 44.23–33) and *Epitome*, II, 336.20–337.7; Dio, *History*, II, 154–72 (Book 45.18–47) and *Epitome*, II, 343.1–7.

<sup>63</sup> See, respectively, Dio, *History*, I, 129–31 (fragments 40.34–8) and *Epitome*, II, 117.1–11; Dio, *History*, II, 127–37 (Book 44.36–49) and *Epitome*, II, 337.22–338.17; Dio, *History*, II, 501–7 (Book 55.16–21) and *Epitome*, II, 424.14–22.

<sup>64</sup> *Epitome*, I, 4.19–20.

<sup>65</sup> A similar observation can be made about Xiphilinos, who also left out of his own *Epitome* many of Dio's long speeches: Mallan, 'Style', 618–21.

<sup>66</sup> I have examined at length Zonaras' use of the Plutarchean *Lives* in my article 'Plutarch's *Lives* in the Byzantine Chronographic Tradition: The Chronicle of John Zonaras', *BMGS*, 41 (2017), 15–29. For the reception of Plutarch in Byzantium, see Humble, 'Plutarch in Byzantium'; M. Pade, 'The Reception of Plutarch from Antiquity to the Italian Renaissance', in *A Companion to Plutarch*, ed. by M. Beck (Chichester, 2014), 531–43, particularly at 535–6; Garzya, 'Plutarco a Bisanzio'. I am grateful to Professor Noreen Humble for allowing me to read her study of Plutarch in Byzantium prior to its publication.

<sup>67</sup> The following quotations, for example, are left out of the chronicle: Plutarch, *Romulus*, 57.17–26, 63.30–64.12, 73.25–74.4; Plutarch, *Numa*, 61.6, 67.20–2; Plutarch, *Publicola*, 141.16–142.2; Plutarch, *Pompey*, 275.6–8. The quotation from Sophocles is found in *Epitome*, II, 326.8–9.

entirely alien to the Byzantine tradition and had no significant relation to things still extant was considered to be of little interest. For this reason, material about Roman feasts, customs, institutions, and laws was casually left out of the narrative.<sup>68</sup> The writer does not speak, for instance, of *Talassio*, the traditional Roman acclamation for a bride, and the origin of the custom that we read in *Pompey*.<sup>69</sup> Neither does he give an account of the temples that adorned the city, such as the one devoted to Jupiter Capitolinus, which is described in *Publicola*.<sup>70</sup> It is interesting, by contrast, that he includes in his text pieces of information about the early Roman calendar found in the *Numa*, selecting those that explain the contemporary twelve-month calendar system.<sup>71</sup>

Plutarch's work has a significant ethical dimension as well.<sup>72</sup> He was very much concerned with character. Essentially a collection of portraits, the *Lives* illustrate the virtues and vices of well-known Greek and Roman individuals, aiming to present them as models to imitate or avoid. To some extent, Zonaras attempted to tailor Plutarch's moral biographical accounts to his own interests. The reception of *Numa* is the finest example of the chronicler's creative adaptation of a Plutarchean biography. Numa, the second king of Rome, who is characterized by Plutarch as a wise, just, pious, and peace-loving ruler, is seen by Zonaras as a paradigm of virtue that contemporary readers could potentially emulate. The chronicler does not simply reproduce Plutarch's portrayal of Numa, but actively reconstructs it to offer us a more 'Christianized' version of the life of Rome's early lawgiver. Indeed, it has been suggested that Plutarch might have had the influence he did in middle Byzantium because his moral stance coincided so far with that of Christianity.<sup>73</sup>

It is apparent that certain omissions and alterations to Plutarch's text serve to play down Numa's pagan background. According to Plutarch, for instance, the young Numa would live in 'sacred groves and holy meadows' ('ἐν ἄλσεσι θεῶν καὶ λειμῶσιν ἱεροῖς'), a statement that is changed slightly by Zonaras into 'meadows

<sup>68</sup> For example, see Plutarch, *Romulus*, 21–2; Plutarch, *Numa*, 64.23–66.10, 69.22–77.6; Plutarch, *Publicola*, 136.5–138.9; Plutarch, *Camillus*, ed. by K. Ziegler in, *Plutarchi vitae parallelae*, vol. 1.1 (Leipzig, 1957), 216.21–218.23, 234.14–236.14.

<sup>69</sup> Plutarch, *Pompey*, 279.15–280.9. <sup>70</sup> Plutarch, *Publicola*, 141.5–142.2.

<sup>71</sup> Plutarch, *Numa*, 85.17–86.18.

<sup>72</sup> The most important monograph on the moralizing character and educational value of the Plutarchean *Lives* remains that of T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford, 2002), particularly at 13–98. See, more recently, Stadter, *Roman Readers*.

<sup>73</sup> This is emphatically stated, for instance, in an epigram of the eleventh-century scholar John Mauropous dedicated to Plato and Plutarch. There, Mauropous pleads with God to spare the two because, despite not being Christians, in words and manners they conformed to His ordinances: John Mauropous, *Ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τὸν Πλάτωνα καὶ τὸν Πλούταρχον*, in *The Poems of Christopher of Mytilene and John Mauropous*, ed. and trans. into English by F. Bernard and C. Livanos (Cambridge, MA and London, 2018), 404 (epigram 43). See also Humble, 'Plutarch in Byzantium'; Garzya, 'Plutarcho a Bisanzio', 24–5.

and groves' (*ἐν λειμῶσι καὶ ἄλσεσι*).<sup>74</sup> The writer makes no mention of Numa's celestial marriage to the nymph Egeria, from whom the king was believed to have received his wisdom.<sup>75</sup> Neither does he give an account of the religious institutions introduced by Numa. Following Plutarch, he adds that the king managed to soften the citizens of Rome and make their warlike attitude a more peaceful one, but understandably omits the means through which he achieved this, which included sacrifices, processions, and religious dances.<sup>76</sup> What must have made an impression on Zonaras, furthermore, were Numa's ordinances against human-made idols of gods and blood sacrifices. Not only did the ruler prohibit the veneration of idols, but he also taught his subjects that the divine can only be approached spiritually. As we read in his *Life*, however, Numa's religious attitude had its origins in the doctrines of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras. Indeed, there are many passages in Plutarch's text that underline the significant impact of the Pythagorean ideas on Numa.<sup>77</sup> Naturally, the chronicler leaves out of his narrative all the pro-Pythagorean material found in his source text. Zonaras' portrait gives an image of a ruler who was strongly opposed to pagan practices and urged his people to appeal to gods in some form of 'prayer'. By adapting Plutarch's portrayal of Numa, in other words, Zonaras paints a picture of a Roman king who, though still a pagan, essentially possessed the qualities of a good Christian.

A further issue to address concerns the author's literary tactics when he recounts the period from Pompey's rise to power in c.85 BC to the Battle of Actium in 31 BC.<sup>78</sup> In this part of the text, Zonaras employs several sources which partly overlap in content: *Pompey*, *Caesar*, *Brutus*, *Antony*, and Dio's work. He subjects the material collected from his sources to a thoughtful process of selection and disposition, developing a simple literary technique: he changes his sources in order to change the focus of his narrative.

It would be helpful to take as an example Zonaras' account of the First Triumvirate. Summarizing chapters 5 to 50 of Plutarch's *Pompey*, the chronicler gives an account of Pompey's political and military career. His use of *Pompey* comes to a stop when Zonaras reaches Pompey's interactions with Caesar. The chronicler tells us that he will narrate the rest of Pompey's story along with the story of Caesar, because it coincides with it.<sup>79</sup> Up to the account of the Battle of Pharsalus, Zonaras is based on a single source, Plutarch's *Caesar*. For the decisive battle between the two political men, he combines information from both *Lives*. He consults chapters 43 to 46 of *Caesar* for the section about the omens that appeared to Caesar prior to the battle and about the battle itself. He then draws

<sup>74</sup> Plutarch, *Numa*, 59.22–3; *Epitome*, II, 19.22.

<sup>75</sup> Plutarch, *Numa*, 59.24–60.6. <sup>76</sup> *Epitome*, II, 20.21–2. Cf. Plutarch, *Numa*, 66.11–67.6.

<sup>77</sup> For the theme of Pythagorean philosophy in the *Numa*, see Stadter, *Roman Readers*, 246–57.

<sup>78</sup> *Epitome*, I, 298.8–399.2. <sup>79</sup> *Epitome*, II, 314.6–8.

on chapters 73 and 74 of *Pompey* and focuses on the aftermath of the clash, describing Pompey's flight to Egypt with his wife, Cornelia, and his assassination.

What Zonaras is trying to do is clear. He makes use of the *Pompey* at first, but when the text reaches the age of Caesar, he sets it aside, since its focus understandably rests mainly on Pompey's status and activities during this period. Wishing to put Caesar centre stage, he naturally selects material from the *Caesar*, which gives a much fuller account of his achievements. The events that led to Caesar's triumph at Pharsalus are narrated through the eyes of the victor. To explain what followed the crucial clash between the two, however, the chronicler returns to *Pompey*, which concentrates on what happened to Caesar's rival. Using this material allows him to emphasize the unfortunate end of the Roman statesman and the events immediately following this.

Apparently satisfied with this technique, the chronicler does something similar in his account of the Second Triumvirate. For instance, both Dio's text and Plutarch's *Antony* provide Zonaras with information about the Battle of Actium. He consults the former when presenting the clash itself and the latter when focusing on its disastrous outcome for Antony. Faithful to Dio's narrative, he tells his readers how Augustus regained his courage when Antony's fleet was thrown into disarray by a storm, essentially guiding them to look at the battle from Augustus' perspective.<sup>80</sup> Antony's description in the aftermath of his humiliating defeat, including the scene in which he sat silently in the prow of his ship for three days, is taken from Plutarch and aims to focus the audience's attention solely on the tragic figure of Augustus' opponent.<sup>81</sup>

This literary tactic—changing the sources in order to shift the focus, and so the emphasis, of the narrative—is telling, for it presupposes some sort of advance preparation.<sup>82</sup> The author has selected the appropriate passages allowing him to highlight certain scenes and episodes. This indicates that he had already studied the content of his sources. He must have also considered in some detail the range of material he would include in his own text, the places where he would insert the pieces taken from each source, and the manner in which he would combine them. During this process he might have even made use of notes in order to draw up a plan for collating the information.

The chronicler does not very often inform us about his principal authorities for Roman antiquities. Despite the fact that most of his material is taken from a single source, Zonaras does not acknowledge Dio more than ten times. This contrasts with what we observed in the Jewish section of the work, where the writer repeatedly refers to the *JA*, the text that provides the basic narrative structure.

<sup>80</sup> *Epitome*, II, 398.4–6. Cf. Dio, *History*, II, 346–7 (Book 50.31).

<sup>81</sup> *Epitome*, II, 398.11–399.2. Cf. Plutarch, *Antonius*, ed. by K. Ziegler, in, *Plutarchi vitae parallelae*, vol. 3.1 (Leipzig, 1915), 147.18–22.

<sup>82</sup> Further evidence of advance planning in the *Epitome* is provided by Christopher Mallan in: Mallan, 'The Historian', 361.

Plutarch is mentioned only three times. There are quite a few occasions when the chronicler cites Eusebios by name. In just as many instances, however, he does not identify the source that furnishes him with information on ecclesiastical history. One should also point that Zonaras often tries to make the transition from one source to another without using linking constructions. Material introduced from *Publicola*, *Camillus*, *Brutus*, and *Antony*, for instance, is effectively woven together within Dio's narrative. The same can be observed of the manner in which Zonaras incorporates data from John of Antioch. This approach indicates that the author was making an effort to combine different material organically into a single composition. He attempted in a sense to make the text his own, without betraying the fact that he had pieced together information from disparate accounts.

### 3.3.2 Constantinian and Post-Constantinian Roman History: Books 13 to 18

The section of the *Epitome* dedicated to Byzantine history is slightly longer than that dealing with the Roman past; it fills about 760 printed pages. Zonaras' narrative is composed of units of reigns. It is evident that the author places great emphasis on prominent emperors of the Byzantine period, such as Constantine the Great, Justinian, and Herakleios. He also gives a detailed account of the Isaurian and the Macedonian emperors. When the narrative reaches the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Zonaras elaborates on the events under Romanos Diogenes and Alexios I Komnenos, the last emperor he discusses in his work.

Although scholars have long attempted to identify the origin of Zonaras' Constantinian and post-Constantinian material, the problem is complicated by the fact that many of the texts available to Zonaras are no longer extant.<sup>83</sup> As a supplement to his major source, the chronicle of John of Antioch, it is suggested that Zonaras took material from the works of Philostorgios, Socrates, and the emperor Julian, among others. He himself names the late fifth-century historian Malchos of Philadelphia and Prokopios, the famous historian of Justinian, as his

<sup>83</sup> The existing bibliography on this matter is extensive: Treadgold, *Historians*, 395–6; Cameron, *The Last Pagans*, 659–90; Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 472–8; R. M. Frakes, 'Ammianus Marcellinus and Zonaras on a Late Roman Assassination Plot', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 46 (1997), 121–8; B. Bleckmann, 'Der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras und eine pagane Quelle zur Geschichte Konstantins', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 40 (1991), 343–65; M. Dimaiο, 'Smoke in the Wind: Zonaras' Use of Philostorgius, Zosimus, John of Antioch, and John of Rhodes in His Narrative on the Neo-Flavian Emperors', *Byz*, 58 (1988), 230–55; Dimaiο, 'The Antiochene Connection'; M. Dimaiο, 'History and Myth in Zonaras' *Epitome Historiarum*: The Chronographer as Editor', *Byzantine Studies/Etudes Byzantines*, 10 (1983), 19–28; M. Dimaiο, 'Infaustis Ductoribus Praeviis: The Antiochene Connection, Part II', *Byz*, 51 (1981), 502–10; Patzig, 'Zonaras II'; Patzig, 'Zonaras I'.

sources.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, whether he drew on those directly or instead relied on an intermediary source remains unclear.<sup>85</sup> It has been shown, furthermore, that the *Epitome* shares some material with the *Life of Silvester*, a hagiographical text which was composed by Zonaras himself (as discussed in the first chapter).<sup>86</sup> For the age of Justinian, he must have had access to works which provided him with information about the Nika Revolt that is not known to us from other sources.<sup>87</sup> In terms of the presence of material from Malalas' chronicle in the *Epitome*, it is debatable whether he had direct access to Malalas, or whether he derived information from his work through an intermediary source.<sup>88</sup> Zonaras also made use of Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*, which furnished him with quotes attributed to emperors, as well as with short items of information that cannot be found in any other known text, except for the *Historia Syntomos*.<sup>89</sup>

The *Chronographia* of Theophanes Confessor is Zonaras' principal authority for the period between the reigns of Herakleios (r. 610–641) and Michael I Rangabe (r. 811–813), although we can find traces of other works, too, such as the chronicle of Symeon Logothete and texts that follow the same tradition.<sup>90</sup> These sources are exploited in Zonaras' account of the emperors of the Amorian and the Macedonian dynasty as well. However, the great portion of the text there is based primarily on the chronicle of John Skylitzes.<sup>91</sup> When Skylitzes' description comes to an end with the deposition of Michael VI Stratiotikos (r. 1056–1057), Zonaras

<sup>84</sup> For Malchos, see *Epitome*, III, 131.7. For Prokopios, see *Epitome*, III, 170.1–8, 171.15–7.

<sup>85</sup> Ziegler, 'Zonaras', 729. <sup>86</sup> See p. 19 of this book.

<sup>87</sup> See the observations of J. Bury in his article 'The Nika Riot', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 17 (1897), 92–119, at 104–5, 116–17.

<sup>88</sup> Studies according to which Zonaras made use of Malalas' chronicle are, for instance: Treadgold, *Historians*, 396; R. Scott, 'From Propaganda to History to Literature: The Byzantine Stories of Theodosius' Apple and Marcian's Eagles', in *History as Literature*, ed. by Macrides, 115–33, in 130. Banchich, however, expresses his doubts as to whether Zonaras had direct access to Malalas: Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*, 79–80, 93–4. Also, Zonaras is not listed among the authors who, according to Jeffreys, employed Malalas as a source: Jeffreys, 'Malalas in Greek', in *Studies*, ed. by Jeffreys.

<sup>89</sup> See T. Kampianaki, 'Sayings Attributed to Emperors of Old and New Rome in Michael Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*', in *From Constantinople to the Frontier*, ed. by Matheou, Kampianaki, and Bondioli, 311–25; 'Dželebdžić, 'Izreke careva'. A notable mistake made by Zonaras, who in all probability follows Psellos, is that Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos composed some verses for his late wife, Helen: *Epitome*, III, 483.4–5. Constantine, of course, died in 959 and predeceased his wife by two years. This error appears only in Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, 102.10–2. Although the authorship of *Historia Syntomos* was questioned in the past, it is fairly certain now that it is an original Psellian work: Dželebdžić, 'Ιστορία σύντομος', 5–19; J. Duffy and E. Papaioannou, 'Michael Psellos and the Authorship of *Historia Syntomos*: Final Considerations', in *Βυζάντιο: κράτος και κοινωνία*, ed. by A. Avramea, A. Laiou, and E. Chrysos (Athens, 2003), 219–29; Ljubarskij, 'Some Notes'; Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, IX–XV (introduction); K. Snipes, 'A Newly Discovered History of the Roman Emperors by Michael Psellos', *JÖB*, 32 (1982), 53–65.

<sup>90</sup> Scott, 'Narrating the Reign', 10; Treadgold, *Historians*, 396; Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 474, 477–9.

<sup>91</sup> Generally, on Zonaras' relation to Skylitzes, see Trapp, *Militärs*, 13–9, in which the parallel extracts between Zonaras and Skylitzes are identified, and also F. Hirsch, *Byzantinische Studien* (Leipzig, 1876), 379–96. Catherine Holmes has underlined that Zonaras downplays the importance given to aristocratic families by Skylitzes: Holmes, *Basil II*, 199.



moves on with his narrative by making heavy use of the text known in modern scholarship as *Skylitzes Continuatus*, penned most likely by Skylitzes himself,<sup>92</sup> and the *Chronography* of Psellos.<sup>93</sup> The chronicler cites both Psellos and Skylitzes by name.<sup>94</sup>

The relationship of the *Epitome* to the historical work of George Kedrenos, Zonaras' immediate precursor in the field of chronicle writing, is open to conjecture. Kedrenos, who composed his work in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, draws heavily on sources also employed by Zonaras; he excerpts the historical narratives of Symeon the Logothete and George the Monk, and closely copies Skylitzes' chronicle. Therefore, it is hard to tell whether Zonaras used Kedrenos' work in parallel to his other sources.<sup>95</sup> Notably, he includes in his narrative some memorable pieces of information that are not mentioned by other chroniclers prior to Kedrenos. Such information includes, for example, the Roman emperor Elagabalus' attempt to surgically change his gender and the astronomer Valens' prediction about the longevity of Constantinople, which is inserted into both Kedrenos' and Zonaras' texts in connection to the encaenia of the city in 330.<sup>96</sup> As I will discuss later, moreover, Zonaras seems to insert into his account of Leo III's twelve wise advisers a detail from Kedrenos that is absent from both George the Monk and Symeon the Logothete.<sup>97</sup> Based on these examples, I believe that it is fairly possible that Zonaras had access to and occasionally consulted Kedrenos' chronicle. In any case, Kedrenos and Zonaras

<sup>92</sup> It should be mentioned that Zonaras himself would not have understood Skylitzes' chronicle and *Skylitzes Continuatus* as two different texts, as they must have appeared as a single source in the manuscript available to him. Unlike Zonaras, George Kedrenos, for instance, had access to a manuscript which contained Skylitzes' chronicle, but not *Skylitzes Continuatus*: Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, ix. The existing scholarship that supports the common identity of Skylitzes and *Skylitzes Continuatus* is summarized in Holmes, *Basil II*, 81–5. Trapp has indicated the parallel passages between Zonaras and *Skylitzes Continuatus*, as well as between Zonaras and Psellos: Trapp, *Militärs*, 13–19. In this connection, it should be said that Trapp argues that Zonaras also had access to the *History* of Michael Attaleiates, drawing upon his work once: Trapp, *Militärs*, 13. In my view, *Skylitzes Continuatus* depends so heavily on Attaleiates that it is extremely difficult to tell whether Zonaras consulted Attaleiates directly.

<sup>93</sup> For information about how the chronicler handles Psellos' *Chronography*, see D. R. Reinsch, 'Wer waren die Leser und Hörer der *Chronographia* des Michael Psellos, *ZRVI*, 50–1 (2013), 389–98, in 395, in which Zonaras' reception of Psellos is briefly discussed. See also O. Lampsidis, 'Ο Μιχαήλ Ψελλός ως πηγή της «Επιτομής» του Ιωάννου Ζωναρά', *Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, 19 (1949), 170–88.

<sup>94</sup> *Epitome*, III, 672.13 and 673.4, respectively.

<sup>95</sup> Kedrenos' chronicle is not listed among the sources of the *Epitome* in Neville, *Guide*, 192, whereas Scott and Treadgold note that Zonaras might have known Kedrenos' text: Scott, 'Narrating the Reign', 26; Treadgold, *Historians*, 396.

<sup>96</sup> For these examples, see: Mallan, 'The Historian', 361 and Scott, 'Narrating the Reign', 25–6, respectively. However, we cannot be sure whether Zonaras drew this material from Kedrenos, or whether both authors used common sources. According to Mallan, the detail about Elagabalus could also have been taken from Dio's *Roman History*. Scott noted that both Kedrenos and Zonaras could have derived the piece of information about Valens' prediction from a common source that is unknown to us.

<sup>97</sup> See p. 80 (footnote 75) of this book.



exemplify two different approaches to the compilation, combination, and arrangement of source texts. Kedrenos adopts a minimally interventionist approach to his materials, favouring a very close, almost word-for-word, copying of the texts available to him; Zonaras, in contrast, prefers selecting materials and summarizing his sources, enriching the texts that form the spine of his narrative with information from additional sources, and making telling alterations to the wording of the works he uses. One cannot tell whether Zonaras' organized presentation of his material, which required advance planning, was a 'reaction' specifically to the practice of Kedrenos, his immediate predecessor. Still, it reflects an effort on Zonaras' part to employ a more sophisticated working method than that of several earlier historians who were known to him and copied their sources very faithfully, such as Xiphilinos.

The section of the *Epitome* that concerns the age of Alexios Komnenos is the only one original to the writer. As a high-ranking officer in the judicial system during the Komnenian regime, Zonaras essentially bases his account on his own recollections, impressions, and knowledge of the imperial environment. A subject that has been the cause of considerable debate among scholars is the relationship between Zonaras' narrative of Alexios and Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, her biography of her father. It is not entirely clear whether either of the two writers was aware and made use of the other's work. In the secondary literature, the *Alexiad* is sometimes listed as one of the chronicler's sources.<sup>98</sup> Anna certainly began writing his work at least in or after 1138, the year of the death of her husband, the caesar Nikephoros Bryennios.<sup>99</sup> She herself reveals that she collected much information for her work during the reign of Manuel Komnenos and points out that she was still writing in 1148.<sup>100</sup> As I suggested in the first chapter, Zonaras must have completed the *Epitome* between 1143 and c.1150.<sup>101</sup> If this is true, it means that the two historical accounts are almost contemporaneous, and that either or both authors could well have acquired an early draft of the other's work. As has been convincingly argued, nevertheless, there exist significant chronological discrepancies between the two texts, as well as some divergences in

<sup>98</sup> For example, both Hunger and Ziegler count the *Alexiad* among Zonaras' sources: Hunger, *Literatur*, I, 416–17; Ziegler, 'Zonaras', 729. In his doctoral thesis, Peter Frankopan has also argued that Zonaras' account of the reign of Alexios Komnenos is based on Anna's work: Frankopan, 'Foreign Policy', 40–8. For a slightly different suggestion, that the *Epitome* was written prior to or simultaneously with the *Alexiad*, see L. Orlov Vilimonović, *Structure and Features of Anna Komnene's Alexiad. Emergence of a Personal History* (Amsterdam, 2019), 63–9.

<sup>99</sup> In the proem of the *Alexiad*, Anna tells us that her writing continues that of Bryennios, who died before finishing his own history: Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, 7.47–8.93. About the dating of the *Alexiad* in general, see Magdalino, 'The Pen of the Aunt', 15–16.

<sup>100</sup> Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, 451.42–452.64.

<sup>101</sup> For the dating of the *Epitome*, see p. 10 of this book.

the recording of events.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, I tend to agree with the suggestion that Zonaras did not exploit the *Alexiad*, although he might have read it.<sup>103</sup>

In his treatment of Theophanes, Zonaras shows himself to be in step with a major literary development noted from the mid-ninth century onwards, the rejection of the rigid chronological system adopted by earlier writers of historical accounts.<sup>104</sup> Theophanes would generally organize his material according to *anni mundi* and indictions, also mentioning the regnal year of a Roman emperor, as well as the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch.<sup>105</sup> Departing from the strict chronological scheme of his source, Zonaras gives dates only sporadically and weaves them into his narrative. He compresses and paraphrases Theophanes' account by collating distant pieces of information found in different parts of the account. The most substantial part of the material that he uses relates to important political and military developments, as well as significant events in Church history. Unlike his source, he does not show much interest in delineating the broader contemporary context within which Byzantine affairs can be set, supplying very little on events in faraway places, such as in the Persian and the Arab worlds. He tells us nothing, for instance, about the affairs of the Arabs in the later reign of Herakleios, a subject on which Theophanes lays great emphasis.<sup>106</sup> In this way, he places the events that took place in Constantinople at the centre of his narrative. Similarly, he often ignores physical phenomena and natural disasters, even if these underline a point made by his source. For example, he does not report the volcanic eruption on the island of Thera, presented by Theophanes as divine retribution for Leo III's policy of iconoclasm.<sup>107</sup>

The history of Skylitzes forms the main spine of Zonaras' narrative until the deposition of Michael VI Stratiotikos in 1057. In general, Zonaras remains very close to the sequence of events in his source; every important episode in Skylitzes appears in the appropriate order in the *Epitome*, too, albeit more briefly described. Nevertheless, one can note several divergences in the positioning of the material between the two texts. A striking example is how the two authors insert in their narratives the stories that circulated about Basil I's life prior to his accession to the throne. Following his presentation of Michael III's assassination and the Macedonian's rise to the imperial office, Skylitzes tells us about the numerous incidents that foreshadowed Basil's regal destiny from his infancy.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps considering it more efficient, Zonaras incorporates this material at an earlier point, just before his description of Basil's affinity with Michael and gradual rise

<sup>102</sup> Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί*, 521–6; Angold, 'Afterword'.

<sup>103</sup> Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί*, 521–6; Macrides, 'Who Wrote the *Alexiad*?', 73.

<sup>104</sup> Holmes, *Basil II*, 180–1; *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, lii–liiii.

<sup>105</sup> *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, lxiii–lxxiv.

<sup>106</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 333–41. Cf. *Epitome*, III, 218.9–10.

<sup>107</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 404–5.

<sup>108</sup> Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 115–27 (Book 7, chapters 1–10).

to power.<sup>109</sup> To provide an additional example, the author initially omits the episode about Basil's visit to Patras and his acquaintance with the famous widow Danielis much later than his source.<sup>110</sup> Reaching the point when Skylitzes relates Danielis' arrival at Constantinople to meet the newly crowned emperor Basil, Zonaras has to include information he had previously left out, but is now necessary to the understanding of his account.

It is worth exploring more closely Zonaras' account of the regime of Romanos I Lekapenos (r. 920–944). By making several additions to Skylitzes' text, the chronicler repeatedly attempts to impress on his audience that the tragic fate of the emperor and his sons should be interpreted as divine retribution for the offence they committed—casting aside Constantine Porphyrogennetos, the rightful heir to the Byzantine throne. At first, Zonaras tells us that Romanos put his firstborn son, Christopher, ahead of Constantine in the line of succession and adds his own opinion about that: 'so, it was as if the genuine emperor and the one to whom rulership belonged by inheritance was illegitimate. But retribution did not neglect these things' ('ἦν οὖν ὁ ἀυθιγενῆς βασιλεὺς καὶ ᾧ κατὰ κληρὸν ἡ βασιλεία διέφερον ὡσπερ παρέγγραπτος. ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἡ δίκη οὐκ ἐπενύσταξεν').<sup>111</sup> A while later, when he is about to narrate what happened to the Lekapenos family once Constantine had risen to power, the writer reiterates his belief, more strongly this time, that divine retribution falls on those who are unjust. In Zonaras' own words: 'now the narrative comes to add the following as well and show that, albeit rather slowly perhaps, providence pursues those who do wrong, prolonging for them the time of repentance, but if they do not keep away from evil, providence pursues them slowly and exacts the punishment' ('ἡκει δὲ νῦν ὁ λόγος προσθήσω καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς καὶ δείξω ὡς κὰν βραδύτερον ἴσως μέτεισι τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας ἢ πρόνοια, μετανοίας αὐτοῖς ἐπιμετροῦσα καιρὸν, ἀλλὰ γε τοῦ κακοῦ μὴ ἀπεχομένου μέτεισι σχολαίῳ ποδὶ καὶ δίκας εἰσπράττεται').<sup>112</sup> To conclude his report of Romanos and his sons, Zonaras claims that 'in this manner retribution came after each one of them' ('καὶ οὕτω τούτων ἕκαστον ἡ δίκη μετηῆλθεν').<sup>113</sup> Comments of a similar kind do not appear in the corresponding sections of the *Synopsis*. As is clear, the author adapts the material he receives from Skylitzes to further his own moralizing agenda and give the story of Romanos an edifying character for the benefit of his readers.

An additional consideration about the portion of Zonaras' text that is based on the *Synopsis* and *Skylitzes Continuatus* is that the narrative is interspersed with short comments about the attitudes of famous historical figures. The writer draws on the portrayals of individuals which are embedded in his source texts. Just as Skylitzes does, Zonaras presents his readers with a portrait of Constantine

<sup>109</sup> *Epitome*, III, 407.13–412.18.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 433.3–434.16. Cf. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 21–2 (Book 7, chapter 6).

<sup>111</sup> *Epitome*, III, 475.1–3.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 480.6–10.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 482.5.

Porphyrogennetos that emphasizes both the virtues and the flaws of the emperor.<sup>114</sup> For the description of Constantine Monomachos, he collects material from both the *Synopsis* and *Skylitzes Continuatus*,<sup>115</sup> while his assessment of Isaac Komnenos, in a few lines at the end of the part dedicated to his reign, is taken directly from *Skylitzes Continuatus*.<sup>116</sup> The same applies to the ambivalent picture he paints for Constantine Doukas shortly afterwards.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the *Epitome's* strong dependence on these two works, Zonaras occasionally gives precedence to Psellos' *Chronography*. To provide a notable example, a long passage which runs parallel to Psellos' text has to do with the last years of the reign of Michael IV Paphlagonian (r. 1034–1041) and the events that followed the accession of Michael V Kalaphates (r. 1041–1042) to the throne, the expulsion of the empress Zoe to Prinkipos and the subsequent popular uprising included.<sup>118</sup> Having access to two sources that overlap each another, Zonaras weaves his material together into a composite narrative, in a manner resembling his use of information taken from Dio and Plutarch. Once again, this process of selection and combination must have required some preparation and prior thought on the part of the writer.

Seemingly very pleased with the comprehensive and detailed portraits of Psellos, he derives from the *Chronography* a large supply of biographical information.<sup>119</sup> Following his source text, he gives us a portrayal of Basil II the Macedonian (r. 1076–1025), illustrating how his attitude changed over time.<sup>120</sup> To discuss Basil's character in the later years of his reign, he combines information from two distinct extracts of Psellos, showing Zonaras' own attempt to provide his readers with a coherent description of the emperor. The *Chronography* also furnishes the chronicler with the depictions of the emperor Constantine VIII (r. 1025–1028) and Michael Kalaphates.<sup>121</sup>

An immediate implication of the author's extensive use of *Skylitzes' Synopsis*, *Skylitzes Continuatus*, and Psellos' *Chronography* is that there is an obvious change in the character of the narrative: personalities start to emerge more vividly than they do in the earlier parts of Zonaras' work. Of course, this is dictated to a great

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 482.17–483.11. Cf. *Skylitzes, Synopsis*, 237–8 (Book 12, chapter 3). Here, it may be noted that Zonaras reverses the order in which *Skylitzes* describes the qualities of Constantine. He speaks about the positive ones first and the negative ones second.

<sup>115</sup> *Epitome*, III, 646–7 and 676–7. Cf. *Skylitzes, Synopsis*, 476–7 (Book 22, chapter 29); *Skylitzes Continuatus*, 112–13.

<sup>116</sup> *Epitome*, III, 674.1–6. Cf. *Skylitzes Continuatus*, 110–1.

<sup>117</sup> *Epitome*, III, 676.15–677.16. Cf. *Skylitzes Continuatus*, 112. <sup>118</sup> *Epitome*, III, 601–12.

<sup>119</sup> For an analysis of the manner in which Psellos draws the portraits of the emperors in the *Chronography*, see E. Pietsch, *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos: Kaisergeschichte, Autobiographie und Apologie* (Wiesbaden, 2005), 2–6, 66–128.

<sup>120</sup> *Epitome*, III, 554–5, 561–2. Cf. Psellos, *Chronography*, 13.1–14.18 (Book 1, chapter 22), 19.1–20.14 (Book 1, chapters 31–2).

<sup>121</sup> *Epitome*, III, 569.7–570.13, 606.9–17, respectively. Cf. Psellos, *Chronography*, 27.1–29.14 (Book 2, chapters 6–9), 83.1–84.29 (Book 5, chapter 9), respectively.

extent by the nature of these sources. As previous scholarship has shown, historiographical texts produced in Constantinople from the mid-tenth century onwards display features of historical biographies.<sup>122</sup> Among eleventh-century writers, Skylitzes—and particularly Psellos—exemplify this trend towards an anthropocentric conception of history-writing.

It should be stressed, however, that the shift towards a more personality-focused narrative in Zonaras' presentation of Byzantium did not emerge solely as a result of the typology of his source material. The chronicler himself appears to have been very fond of the biographical style of writing that had prevailed in the genre of historiography up to that point, and wished to follow the literary conventions laid down by his predecessors. He therefore strives to give his readers a full picture of the character of a Byzantine individual, despite the abridgement of his source texts. Several remarks indicate that although he condenses his source material, he does not wish to achieve brevity at the expense of building up comprehensive pictures of Byzantine emperors. Conveying a negative image of Michael II the Stammerer (r. 820–829), for instance, he explains that 'a few of the many features of his wickedness and even his folly were written' ('ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγα τῆς ἐκείνου κακίας ἢ καὶ ἀνοίας γνωρίσματα ξυγγεγράφαι').<sup>123</sup> Later, he summarizes the turpitudes of Michael III 'the Drunkard' (r. 842–867) and concludes his account of the emperor with the following conspicuous sentence: 'But to narrate everything done by this coterie, in which the emperor himself happened to participate, would be a lot of chit-chat and something disgusting no less' ('ἀλλ' ἅπαντα καταλέγειν τὰ τοῦ τοιοῦτου χοροῦ, οἷς συνθιασώτης καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐτύγχανεν ὦν, πολλῆς ἂν εἴη λέσχης καὶ ἀηδίας οὐχ ἥκιστα').<sup>124</sup> It is apparent that although he condensed his sources, Zonaras sought to provide his readers with sufficient information to assess the character of an emperor.

Evidence of Zonaras' interest in the biographies of Byzantine individuals is also provided by the additions he occasionally makes to his sources in order to elaborate on the story of a well-known historical figure. His account of the hymnographer Kassia is a case in point.<sup>125</sup> In the part of his text dedicated to the emperor Theophilos (r. 829–842), Skylitzes makes no mention of the poetess at all. Zonaras departs from the narrative of his source to relate the famous episode of the verbal exchange between Theophilos and Kassia that led the ruler to choose

<sup>122</sup> See Markopoulos, 'Narrative Historiography', in which earlier bibliography on the subject is included, and also Markopoulos, 'Genesis'.

<sup>123</sup> *Epitome*, III, 339.11–12.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 407.9–12.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.3–355.8. For Kassia and her oeuvre, see the classic study on Kassia by I. Rochow, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia* (Berlin, 1967), in which Zonaras' presentation of the poet can be found at 7–8. See also N. Tsironis, 'The Body and the Senses in the Work of Kassia the Hymnographer: Literary Trends in the Iconoclastic Period', *ByzSym*, 16 (2005), 139–57.

Theodora over her as his bride.<sup>126</sup> He calls attention to Kassia's lineage, appearance, and learning, carefully sketching an encomiastic portrait of the woman. She is said to have been beautiful, adept with words, and of a distinguished extraction. I quote in full what he adds after that:

[...] and withdrawing herself, she was living with herself and God, without disregarding her intellectual education. For this reason, one does not find her writings lacking educational virtues. This is how she handled her own affairs, and when she failed to secure the hand of a mortal king, she was betrothed to the king of all things and was allotted the heavenly, rather than the earthly, kingdom.

[...] καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ μονάσασα ἑαυτῇ ἔζη καὶ τῷ θεῷ, τῆς λογικῆς παιδείας μὴ ἀλογήσασα. ὅθεν καὶ συγγράμματα ἐκείνης εὐρίσκονται εὐπαιδευσίας χαρίτων οὐκ ἄμοιρα. καὶ ἡ μὲν οὕτω διέθετο τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἀτευκτήσασα βασιλέως φθαρτοῦ τῷ παμβασιλεῖ ἑαυτὴν ἐμνηστεύσατο καὶ ἀντὶ γεγηρᾶς βασιλείας τὴν ἐπουράνιον ἐκληρώσατο.

The writer paints an idealized picture of Kassia, accentuating her intellectual capacities. When she took the monastic vows, she did not devote herself solely to her spiritual labour as a nun, but took pains to pursue her education as well. She was an active scholar, composing a series of works in which Zonaras discerns an upright character. This description might sound strangely familiar to a reader of Zonaras; in fact, behind Kassia's portrayal one could discern the image of the chronicler himself. He, too, was learned, and despite having withdrawn to a monastery, did not abandon his scholarly preoccupations, producing numerous works. Zonaras evidently tailors Kassia's portrayal to suit his own image. His audience would probably be able to grasp this self-referential allusion. Zonaras was not the only author to have drawn analogies between his own personality and that of one of his heroes. The portrayal of Kassia mirrors similar practices in hagiographical texts, with Psellos' adaptation of the image of St Auxentios to that of his own in the *Life of St Auxentios* the most prominent example.<sup>127</sup>

Above all, it is the distinctively personality-centred manner in which he presents the reign of Alexios Komnenos that is most revealing of Zonaras' engagement with the biographies and characters of renowned Byzantine figures. The fact that he does not depend on an external source here allows him great freedom in handling his material. It is indicative of the chronicler's authorial

<sup>126</sup> For an interpretation of how the famous legend of Kassia's participation in the bride-show for the hand of Theophilos emerged, see M. Lauxtermann, 'Three Biographical Notes', *BZ*, 91(1998), 391–405.

<sup>127</sup> E. Fisher, 'Michael Psellos and a Hagiographical Landscape: The Life of St. Auxentios and the Encomion of Symeon the Metaphrast', in *Reading Michael Psellos*, ed. by C. Barber and D. Jenkins (Leiden, 2006), 57–71; A. Kazhdan, 'An Attempt at Hagio-Autography: The Pseudo-Life of "Saint" Psellus', *Byz*, 53 (1983), 546–56. Solely thirteenth-century examples are provided by J. Munitiz, 'Hagiographical Autobiography in the 13th Century', *Byzantinoslavica*, 53 (1992), 243–9.

preferences that in a part of the *Epitome* where he is not affected by the nature, style, and agenda of a source he opts to pay special attention to the attributes and defects of the emperor under consideration. For the founder of the Komnenian dynasty, the author composes one of the most extensive and detailed portraits in his narrative. He draws an ambivalent picture of Alexios, telling us of his virtues as a private citizen, but also highlighting his shortcomings as a ruler. As a private man, he is praised for being of a moderate temper, and for being lenient and approachable, among other things.<sup>128</sup> At the same time, he is severely criticized as an emperor, because he spent excessive amounts of money; he did not preserve the old customs of the Roman polity; he did not treat the state fisc as public, but rather as his own property; he did not offer members of the senatorial class honours appropriate to their rank; and finally he distributed privileges and a great amount of wealth to his relatives and servants.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, the presentation of Alexios as an emperor is a 'blatant psogos'.<sup>130</sup> The next chapter of the book discusses at length the comprehensive portrayal of the Komnenian ruler.<sup>131</sup>

In this connection, one can note that Zonaras was not equally interested in the portrayals of Roman and Byzantine individuals. Dio's *Roman History* and Plutarch's *Lives* were rich sources of biographical material. Zonaras, however, either condenses or omits altogether portraits of Roman individuals found in his sources. Compared to Dio's text, for instance, the *Epitome* gives a briefer presentation of the Roman statesmen Scipio Africanus and Agrippa.<sup>132</sup> The depiction of the emperor Tiberius is also very much abridged.<sup>133</sup> The author opts to leave out of his narrative Dio's portrayal of Hannibal and the paragraph in which the Roman historian gives his assessment of Antony and Cleopatra.<sup>134</sup> Likewise, drawing on Plutarch, the chronicler gives more succinct descriptions of the personalities of famous Roman figures than those he finds in his source. In other words, he is disinclined to select Roman material to suit contemporary tastes for a personality-focused style of writing. A plausible explanation for this might have to do with the expectations of his readers: Zonaras must have been aware that he was addressing an audience which was familiar with, and perhaps anticipated, the presence of biographical material about Byzantine individuals in historical texts. His readers were accustomed to finding vivid images of Byzantine emperors in historical works, such as those of Theophanes Continuatus, Psellos, Skylitzes, Michael Attaleiates, Nikephoros Bryennios, and Anna Komnene. There,

<sup>128</sup> *Epitome*, III, 765.5–766.3.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 732.15–733.4, 766.9–767.10. For Zonaras' critique of Alexios, see Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik', 329–33; Kazhdan, 'Social Views', 59–62.

<sup>130</sup> Holmes, *Basil II*, 180. <sup>131</sup> See pp. 69–70 of this book.

<sup>132</sup> See, respectively, *Epitome*, II, 284.20–285.6. Cf. Dio, *History*, I, 309–10 (fragments 70.4–9); *Epitome* II, 417.20–418.6. Cf. Dio, *History*, II, 469–70 (Book 54.29).

<sup>133</sup> *Epitome*, II, 433.1–12. Cf. Dio, *History*, II, 559–60 (Book 57.1).

<sup>134</sup> See, respectively, Dio, *History*, I, 191–4 (fragments 54.1–9) and Dio, *History*, II, 365–6 (Book 51.15).



they would read of emperors' virtues, flaws, and whims. Stories and anecdotes, too, circulated about them.<sup>135</sup> Encomiastic poems were also a likely medium through which a contemporary audience could learn of an emperor's appearance, among other things.<sup>136</sup> In a sense, memories of Byzantine emperors were still very much alive in Zonaras' time. Unlike Byzantine rulers, though, figures of Republican Rome and the Principate belonged to the distant past, the days of antiquity, and were probably not of equal interest to the twelfth-century audience.

At this point, it is relevant to add that the chronicler maintains a largely secular focus in his presentation of Byzantine history. Building his narrative around emperors and reigns, he pays much more attention to secular than religious matters. This is not to say, of course, that he does not address issues relating to the Church. He does, but the portion of the text devoted to ecclesiastical affairs is considerably smaller than that dedicated to imperial history. Zonaras does not really deliver on the 'promise' he gives to his readers in the proem of the *Epitome* to concentrate on the lives of both the emperors and patriarchs of Constantinople, as well as on the councils of the Church.<sup>137</sup> The fact that he places less emphasis on Church matters than on secular ones is manifested by the type of source material he selected for his account of Byzantium, historical narratives that dealt largely with imperial history (*Historia Syntomos*, Skylitzes' *Synopsis*, *Skylitzes Continuatus*, and Psellos' *Chronography*). The secular bias is also clear in the last part of the chronicle, which deals with the reign of Alexios Komnenos, where Zonaras does not depend on an external source. The author is interested primarily in the emperor's personality, as well as his internal and external policy, discussing in only a few lines the patriarchs of the time.<sup>138</sup> Why, then, does he give the impression in his proem that he will focus equal attention on secular and ecclesiastical affairs? As a good 'publicist' of his own work, Zonaras wished to attract readers who had a keen interest in the history of the Church. Chapter 6 will show that he aimed to address his chronicle, among others, to cultivated

<sup>135</sup> For this, see the illuminating article by L. Garland, 'Basil II as Humorist', *Byz*, 69 (1999), 321–43, esp. in 332–3. Discussing Psellos' presentation of Basil II in his *Chronography*, Garland argues that corpora of imperial sayings circulated in the palace during this period and that one containing the witticisms of Basil was available to the writer. She further highlights a part of the *Chronography*, in which Psellos relates that the emperor Isaac Komnenos would entertain his entourage 'with stories of the old times, recalling all the witty sayings of Romanus's son, the emperor Basil the Great': see Psellos, *Chronography*, 245.6 (Book 7, chapter 76).

<sup>136</sup> Floris Bernard, for example, has investigated an encomiastic poem of the eleventh-century poet Christopher of Mytilene addressed to Constantine Monomachos: Bernard, *Poetry*, 103. An extensive poem of the twelfth-century poet Manganeios Prodromos, which describes in encomiastic terms the body of Manuel Komnenos, has been analysed by Michael Jeffreys: M. Jeffreys, 'Rhetorical' Texts', in *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. by E. Jeffreys (Aldershot, 2003), 87–100, at 95–6. See also Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 471–2, for an epigram composed by Andronikos Kamateros, which is an *ekphrasis* of a portrait of Manuel Komnenos.

<sup>137</sup> See pp. 31–2 of this book.

<sup>138</sup> *Epitome*, III, 734.1–16, 750.16–751.9.



ecclesiastical men.<sup>139</sup> This audience might have had a particular preference for the religious material contained in the *Epitome*. Indeed, the last chapter will provide examples of later readers who were monks and members of the clergy, and who made use of the chronicle to gather information on the history of the Church in particular.<sup>140</sup>

To reach some overarching conclusions, this chapter has shown that Zonaras sought to produce a compact historical account, one which related only notable historical events of early Christian and Roman history, and which would be beneficial to his audience. The foundation of the chronicler's methodology is the adherence to a single source, which provides him with the basic structure of his account. Zonaras employs the rest of his readings to supplement his principal sources. As an epitomizer, he was concerned with creating a concise account, but at the same time preserving the essential data found in his sources. The manner in which the writer modified his sources, the degree to which he condensed each one of them, and the type of material he selected or omitted varied a great deal. There are indications that he would prepare in advance for the selection, arrangement, and presentation of his material so as to emphasize a particular episode or historical figure, or to avoid overlapping information. What characterizes his method, particularly in his presentation of pre-Constantinian Roman history, is his attempt to adapt the data he collects from his Roman sources—Dio and Plutarch—to make them meaningful and interesting to his Byzantine audience. In the narrative of Byzantium, the dominant principle of Zonaras' methodology is the close attention to the portrayals of famous historical figures, mostly emperors.

<sup>139</sup> See pp. 122–3 of this book.

<sup>140</sup> See p. 148 of this book.

# 4

## The Political and Ideological Context of the *Epitome*

### 4.1 The Political Context: *Kaiserkritik*

The section of the *Epitome* dedicated to Roman and Byzantine history has strong political leanings. Elements of *Kaiserkritik*, namely the critique of a ruler or a ruling dynasty, which could be expressed in the form of subtly disapproving remarks or more blatant accusations,<sup>1</sup> are prominent in Zonaras' narrative. Scholarly discussions that touch upon Zonaras' political and social ideas are closely linked with the presentation of the Komnenian regime under Alexios Komnenos.<sup>2</sup> Laying emphasis on Zonaras' critical attitude towards Alexios' kingship is reasonable to some extent, since the narrative dedicated to the Komnenian era relates to the author's own experiences as a judicial official and can be read as an account counterbalancing Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, the major historical source for the reign of Alexios.<sup>3</sup>

The rights and public responsibilities of the sovereign in Byzantium are themes that are addressed and investigated in texts of different genres, from legal collections and 'mirrors for princes' (an admonitory type of text which offers rulers advice on leadership) to histories and works of court oratory. For authors of historical accounts, it was quite common to criticize policies pursued by past emperors as well as to evaluate whether the reigning emperor was efficient or inefficient in managing government affairs. Franz Tinnefeld's seminal study of *Kaiserkritik* has shed light on the various ways in which historians and chroniclers from the sixth to the twelfth centuries conceived the notion of the abuse of imperial power.<sup>4</sup> To provide an indicative example, John Skylitzes disapproves of

<sup>1</sup> Elements of *Kaiserkritik* can be identified in various media, apart from written texts. For example, it has been argued that the person who commissioned a mid-eleventh-century psalter, the *Vat. gr. 752*, criticizes imperial behaviour through the careful selection and arrangement of miniatures in the manuscript: I. Kalavrezou, N. Trahoulia and S. Sabar, 'Critique of the Emperor in the Vatican Psalter gr. 752', *DOP*, 47 (1993), 195–219.

<sup>2</sup> I cite a selection of studies that deal with the political and social background of the chronicle: Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 47–8; Fryde, *Renaissance*, 53–4; Kazhdan, 'Social Views', 59–63; Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik'.

<sup>3</sup> Two studies that compare Zonaras' account with that of Anna are: Macrides, 'Who Wrote the *Alexiad*?', 72–5; Angold, 'Afterword'.

<sup>4</sup> F. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (Munich, 1971). For the concept of *Kaiserkritik*, see also Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik'.

the well-known 'ἀλληλέγγυον' of Basil II, characterizing it as an unreasonable burden on the wealthy class.<sup>5</sup> He also accuses Michael IV the Paphlagonian of wasting state wealth on 'what were supposed to be his good works' ('τὰς δοκούσας ἐμποιῖας ἀποπληρῶν'), by which the emperor hoped to earn divine forgiveness for the sins he had committed to ascend to the throne.<sup>6</sup> The empresses Zoe and Theodora are criticized by Michael Psellos for spending the wealth that had been accumulated by Basil II on frivolities,<sup>7</sup> and Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1055) for, among other things, spending public money on his mistresses.<sup>8</sup> Michael Attaleiates comments that contemporary emperors break the law and act in a hideous way, using as the pretext that they are acting in the public good.<sup>9</sup>

Members specifically of the Komnenian family became targets of attack by authors of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. Like Zonaras, the patriarch of Antioch John Oxeites was a severe critic of Alexios Komnenos.<sup>10</sup> In an oration delivered in 1091 in the presence of the emperor himself, the patriarch expressed a series of concerns about the decline of the Empire under Alexios.<sup>11</sup> He accused the emperor of unacceptable taxation, of seizing the properties of the Church and of favouring his relatives, a clan which, in his view, greatly damaged the imperial office and the people. In his account of the sack of Thessalonike by the Normans in 1185, Eustathios, the metropolitan of the city, depicts the emperor Andronikos I Komnenos (r. 1183–1185) in a negative light, condemning him for brutally executing all those he believed harboured ambitions of becoming emperors.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, David Komnenos, the governor of Thessalonike during the capture of the city, is characterized by Eustathios as a traitor for neglecting the common good and caring only for his own well-being.<sup>13</sup> In an epistle to Theodore I Laskaris (r. 1205–1221), the first emperor of Nicaea, Michael Choniates, Niketas' brother, hints at the Komnenoi when he indicates that former Byzantine rulers, who took over the reins of the state by means of a huge army, an extensive network of relatives, and hidden resources, achieved nothing significant.<sup>14</sup>

Leaving aside Zonaras, the most concrete criticism of the mismanagement of the Empire by the Komnenian emperors was made by Niketas Choniates, whose

<sup>5</sup> Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 347.76–80 (Book 17, chapter 32).

<sup>6</sup> Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 997.64–998.74 (Book 20, chapter 7). The translation is taken from *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, 375.

<sup>7</sup> Psellos, *Chronography*, 131.1–132.4 (Book 6, chapters 62–3).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.1–176.9 (Book 6, chapter 153).

<sup>9</sup> Attaleiates, *Historia*, 151.2–4.

<sup>10</sup> V. Stankovic and A. Berger, 'The Komnenoi and Constantinople Before the Building of the Pantokrator Complex', in *The Pantokrator Monastery*, ed. by Kotzabassi, 3–32, at 23–4; Frankopan, 'Advice'.

<sup>11</sup> John Oxeites, *Τοῦ ἀγιοστότου πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας κῆρ Ἰωάννου λόγος εἰς τὸν βασιλέα Ἀλέξιον τὸν Κομνηνόν*, ed. by P. Gautier, in *Diatribes de Jean l'Oxite contre Alexis Ier Comnène*, REB, 28 (1970), 19–49, esp. from 29 onwards. See also Angold, *Church and Society*, 66–7.

<sup>12</sup> Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Capture*, 14.31–18.15, 54.16–28.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.19–29.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Choniates, *Τῶ βασιλεῖ τῶ Λάσκαρι τῆς Ἀνατολῆς*, in *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae*, ed. by F. Kolovou (Berlin, 2001), 284–6, at 284.11–18.

historical narrative covers the period from 1118, the year of Alexios Komnenos' death, to c.1206, during the aftermath of the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders. Niketas makes a harsh assessment of the policies followed by Manuel Komnenos in particular. In an illuminating article dedicated to the *Kaiserkritik* of twelfth-century writers, Paul Magdalino has underlined that Manuel's systematic practice of surpassing the limits of his constitutional role lies at the centre of Niketas' critique.<sup>15</sup> Niketas castigates the emperor for regarding his subjects as servants instead of free men, eliminating prominent citizens, and exploiting state properties as if they were his own.<sup>16</sup> The fierce opposition expressed by Niketas to Manuel's methods offers an insight into the author's reflections on the constitution of emperorship. This aspect of his critique, however, does not involve questioning the monarchy itself, but addressing the functions and limitations of imperial authority.<sup>17</sup> As will be seen, Zonaras' *Kaiserkritik* has a constitutional character in much the same sense as Choniates'; Zonaras' critique reflects his thoughts on the mechanisms of imperial administration, rather than his alleged disapproval of the institution of monarchy in itself.<sup>18</sup>

The following quotation, certainly one of the most famous extracts from the entire *Epitome*, encapsulates the essence of Zonaras' critique of Alexios Komnenos: 'he treated state affairs neither as common, nor as public and regarded himself not as their administrator, but as their master' ('τοῖς πράγμασιν οὐχ ὡς κοινοῖς οὐδ' ὡς δημοσίοις ἐκέχρητο καὶ ἑαυτὸν οὐκ οἰκονόμον ἤγητο τούτων, ἀλλὰ δεσπότην').<sup>19</sup> Readers are confronted here with the image of an authoritarian ruler who governed the Byzantine state as if he were managing his own private property. At the core of Zonaras' disapproval of the emperor lies Alexios' policy of granting great privileges to his relatives and their followers.<sup>20</sup> Alexios appointed members of his family and those who served them to the highest offices. He also offered them so much wealth that they lived as if they were emperors themselves. Alexios, however, was not equally generous to other members of the aristocracy, which shows the emperor to be an unjust leader, one who did not discriminate according to merit.<sup>21</sup> A direct and very serious consequence of Alexios' practice

<sup>15</sup> Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik', 327. In general on Choniates' *Kaiserkritik*, see also Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 158–79. According to Alicia Simpson, Choniates used Psellos as ideological and literary model for his critique of earlier emperors: Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 253–6.

<sup>16</sup> Choniates, *Historia*, 60.35–44, 143.42–64, 209.59–65.

<sup>17</sup> See also the observation in Frankopan, 'Advice', 71–2.

<sup>18</sup> For a different view of Zonaras' assessment of Alexios Komnenos as a ruler, see Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 47, where it is stated that Zonaras 'articulated a republican critique of the new regime' and expected his readers 'to sympathize with the republican values he outlines'.

<sup>19</sup> *Epitome*, III, 766.14–16.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 732.10–4 and 767.2–9. This subject is examined in Frankopan, 'Kinship'. The Komnenian system of government, based on the domination of members of the ruling family, is explained in Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 180–201.

<sup>21</sup> *Epitome*, III, 767.1–2. Highly educated men of noble extraction and aristocrats without ties to the imperial family were among those excluded by the favouritism of the Komnenian emperors towards their extended family: see Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 189–90.

of providing members of his family with extensive wealth was that 'the imperial treasury, or rather the common vault, was impoverished' (τὸ βασιλικὸν ταμεῖον ἢ τὸ κοινὸν πρυτανεῖον ἐστένωτο).<sup>22</sup> The writer purposely underlines that the emperor spent public funds on achieving his own private goals. Alexios is thus viewed as a ruler who made bad use of the money that belonged to the state. The chronicler further accuses the Komnenian emperor of mistreating the civilian nobility and aiming at weakening specifically the aristocratic class of his time. He protests that Alexios cut the annual instalments which had always been given to those of high rank, deprived senators of their properties (breaking thus a centuries-old tradition)<sup>23</sup> and humiliated them.<sup>24</sup> The fact that the emperor did not preserve the traditional customs of the Roman polity is one of Zonaras' main charges against him.<sup>25</sup> Alexios' policy of allocating offices and honours to those closest to him, instead of granting those privileges according to merit, is understood by Zonaras to be a corruption of the Roman political tradition, which should be preserved intact. The same must be true of Zonaras' accusation that the members of the senatorial class saw their social status diminished during Alexios' regime. A final source of grievance for Zonaras is that the emperor invented abominable ways of collecting money. Alexios is accused of inventing new taxes,<sup>26</sup> making his subjects pay non-existent debts and stripping people who did not owe anything to the state of their belongings.<sup>27</sup>

There can be no doubt that the author is opposed to Alexios' individual model of governance; he makes a direct attack on the political and fiscal reforms of the founder of the Komnenian dynasty. Placing relatives and supporters in key positions in the political and military administration was a policy implemented to a great extent by the Komnenian emperors in general, and was a distinctive feature of their style of rulership.<sup>28</sup> By extension, therefore, Zonaras' critical account of Alexios could be read as an outward rejection of the Komnenian system of government as a whole. It is also very much in line with the critique levelled against the family of the Komnenoi by John Oxeites, Niketas, and Michael Choniates.

I would also suggest that the author's severe criticism of Alexios can be understood as a response to the rhetoric exalting the emperor which was prominent during the regime of his descendants. Both John II Komnenos and Manuel Komnenos sought to keep Alexios' memory alive, publicly extolling his greatness and heroism.<sup>29</sup> They deliberately tried to identify themselves with the founder of their dynasty as a means of reinforcing the legitimacy of their claim to the throne.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, they would advertise themselves as being the only

<sup>22</sup> *Epitome*, III, 732.15–733.1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 733.1–3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 766.17–19.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 766.7–14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 737.15–738.2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 737.11–14.

<sup>28</sup> Frankopan, 'Kinship', 2–3.

<sup>29</sup> Magdalino, 'The Pen of the Aunt', 17–20.

<sup>30</sup> Another member of the Komnenian family, the *sebastokrator* Isaac Komnenos, the third son of Alexios Komnenos, also had imperial aspirations and tried to appropriate his father's memory to

ones of his heirs capable of exceeding Alexios' remarkable accomplishments. Examples of such propaganda include, for instance, the *Mousai*, an admonitory poem which is attributed to Alexios containing advice to his firstborn son,<sup>31</sup> as well as the encomiastic verses of the court poet Manganeios Prodromos, who praised Manuel for emulating and even surpassing the deeds of his father and grandfather.<sup>32</sup> The *Alexiad* is the result of Anna's own effort to perpetuate her father's memory and is a reaction to the comparisons made between Alexios and his descendants.<sup>33</sup> The chronicler's portrayal of Alexios should be seen against this background of imperial panegyric. Raising his objections to the emperor's style of rulership, Zonaras attempts to set the record straight and restore the truth about some aspects of Alexios' management of the state. This does not mean that his presentation of the Komnenian regime was meant to be an answer specifically to Anna Komnene, whose work might have been known to Zonaras.<sup>34</sup> The chronicler himself reveals that the intention behind his focusing on aspects of the emperor's personality was to 'make his character manifest to those that will live afterwards and indicate his disposition to later generations' ('τὸν τρόπον ἐκείνου δῆλον θείημεν τοῖς μετέπειτα καὶ τὸ ἦθος τοῖς ὀψιγόνουις χαρακτηρίσαιμεν').<sup>35</sup> This is a key statement: Zonaras addresses his portrayal of the emperor to future generations, namely audiences who will have no personal recollections of public life under Alexios and who will learn of his reign through the flattering accounts of his encomiasts.

Interestingly, evidence in the *Epitome* demonstrates that Zonaras was well aware that propaganda created by Alexios' successors was circulating about the founder of the Komnenian dynasty. The chronicler mentions that while Alexios was on his deathbed, his son John attempted to take control of the Great Palace.<sup>36</sup> John claimed that he had his father's permission for this initiative, and that he had been offered a ring by Alexios as a token of his blessing. Zonaras does not openly dismiss this story. His careful remarks, however, to the effect that the incident was

pursue his political ambitions: K. Linardou, 'Imperial Impersonations: Disguised Portraits of a Komnenian Prince and His Father', in *John II Komnenos*, ed. by Bucossi and Rodriguez Suarez, 155–82; Magdalino, 'The Pen of the Aunt', 20.

<sup>31</sup> *Mousai*, ed. by P. Maas, 'Die Musen des Kaisers Alexios I', *BZ*, 22 (1913), 348–69. See also M. Mullett, 'Whose Muses? Two Admonitory Poems Attributed to Alexios I Komnenos', in *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine: le texte en tant que message immédiate*, ed. by P. Odorico (Paris, 2012), 195–220; D. R. Reinsch, 'Bemerkungen zu einigen byzantinischen „Fürstenspiegeln“ des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts', in *Synesios von Kyrene: Politik—Literatur—Philosophie*, ed. by H. Seng and L. M. Hoffmann (Turnhout, 2012), 404–19, at 412–16.

<sup>32</sup> For Manganeios Prodromos, as the writer of the extensive corpus of poems found in the codex *Marc. gr. XI 22* is commonly known, see E. and M. Jeffreys, 'Literary Reactions'; W. Hörandner, 'Marginalien zum 'Manganeios' Prodromos', *JÖB*, 24 (1975), 95–106. The titles of Manganeios' poems can be found in Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 494–500. An edition of the full corpus of Manganeios' poems is currently in progress by Professors Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys.

<sup>33</sup> Magdalino, 'The Pen of the Aunt', 21–3.

<sup>34</sup> See p. 58 of this book. I share the opinion of Michael Angold that 'it is just an assumption that it [the *Epitome*] was intended as a riposte to the *Alexiad*': Angold, 'Afterword', 400.

<sup>35</sup> *Epitome*, III, 765.5–6. <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 762.10–16.

reported by John himself and that it escaped the notice of Alexios' wife, Irene Doukaina, indicate that he seriously questioned its truth.

Reading the *Epitome*, one can observe that many faults identified by Zonaras in the Komnenian system of government are not unique to their era. In the *Epitome*, we do not read of any other leaders appointing a large number of their relatives and followers to crucial positions. We learn, however, of numerous emperors, such as Michael III, Constantine Porphyrogenetos, and Michael VI Stratiotikos,<sup>37</sup> who allocated honours and ranks based on questionable criteria. As far as Alexios' practice of lavishing his circle with immense wealth (which led to a deficit in the imperial treasury) is concerned, it is interesting that the same remark appears in Zonaras' overall evaluation of the emperors who reigned after Basil II and up to Isaac Komnenos (r. 1057–1059).<sup>38</sup> Zonaras says that these emperors would spend the public revenues indulging their own pleasures, building churches, and giving money to whomever they wished.<sup>39</sup> As a result, 'the imperial treasuries were empty and the public vaults in want of money' ('οἱ βασιλικοὶ θησαυροὶ ἐκκεκένωντο καὶ τὰ δημόσια πρυτανεῖα χρημάτων ἐσπάνιζον').<sup>40</sup> In addition, a recurring point throughout Zonaras' account of imperial history is that emperors often spent excessive sums of money.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the Komnenian emperor is presented by Zonaras as only one of the emperors who, in various ways, curtailed the income that was traditionally connected with several high offices. Nikephoros Phokas (r. 963–969), for instance, also partly reduced the imperial grants given to senators.<sup>42</sup> Such measurements are comparable, to some extent, to policies that were meant to achieve the same goal—limiting the wealth and power of those high up in the social hierarchy. Indicative of such policies is the 'ἀλληλέγγυον' of Basil II.<sup>43</sup> Zonaras, moreover, sometimes makes the point of telling us that emperors either shunned or ignored the members of the senate and their counsellors.<sup>44</sup> Complaints that a ruler did not maintain the traditional customs of the Roman political order do not appear very often in Zonaras' text. Such remarks, though, are made not only about Alexios but also about Basil II.<sup>45</sup> Finally, in Zonaras' presentation of imperial history, there exist numerous examples of

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 393.9–15; III, 483.12–15; III, 663.12–664.2, respectively.

<sup>38</sup> His assessment at this point draws on the corresponding section of Psellos' *Chronography*: see Psellos, *Chronography*, 234.1–236.1 (Book 7, chapters 58–9).

<sup>39</sup> *Epitome*, III, 667.1–7. <sup>40</sup> *Epitome*, III, 667.6–7.

<sup>41</sup> *Epitome*, II, 537.2, 562.17; III, 25.1–2, 151.17–152.4, 243.9–13, 283.4–7.

<sup>42</sup> *Epitome*, III, 504.18–19.

<sup>43</sup> Deriving this piece of information from Skylitzes' *Synopsis*, the chronicler writes that, according to Basil's decree, men of high rank had to cover the tax contributions of peasants who had been financially ruined: *Epitome*, III, 561.1–3. Cf. Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 347.76–80 (Book 17, chapter 32).

<sup>44</sup> *Epitome*, II, 532.18; III, 563.1–3; 260.4–261.5; 561.11–12.

<sup>45</sup> Following Michael Psellos at this point, the chronicler states that the Macedonian emperor did not wish to manage the affairs of the army and the state according to established tradition, but according to his own judgement: see *Epitome*, III, 561.8–11. Cf. Psellos, *Chronography*, 18.8–10 (Book 1, chapter 29).



emperors, such as Justinian (r. 527–565), Nikephoros I (r. 802–811), and Nikephoros Phokas,<sup>46</sup> who devised outrageous new ways of collecting taxes, from which one can infer that imperial fiscal policies were generally among the subjects that attracted Zonaras' attention.

Taken together, all these remarks suggest that the chronicler's disappointment with the abuse of imperial power by the Komnenians during his time ultimately turned into a general disdain for similar policies, irrespective of the emperors who enforced them. Zonaras makes his sentiments about such policies known throughout his account of Byzantine history.

That Zonaras fundamentally condemned over-taxation, for example, is corroborated by his alterations to an extract derived from Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Commentary on Daniel*. The chronicler employs Theodoret's work to analyse the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel, a prophecy which likens the appearance of four beasts to the succession of four great kingdoms in the world. The fourth beast, traditionally interpreted as being the Roman Empire, is depicted as having teeth made of iron. Here is Theodoret's exegesis of this:

And there [Daniel] says: 'The teeth of the beast are made of iron.' It is clear that he is hinting at the same kingship at this point. He says: '[T]he beast was eating and making [people] thinner.' And indeed Romans put heavier taxes on their subjects. He says: '[A]nd the beast was treading on the rest with its feet.'

*Καὶ ἐνταῦθα δέ φησιν: 'Οἱ ὀδόντες τοῦ θηρίου σιδηροὶ' ὡς εἶναι δῆλον, ὅτι τὴν αὐτὴν κἀνταῦθα βασιλείαν αἰνίττεται. "Ἦσθιε, φησὶ, καὶ ἐλέπτυνε.' Καὶ τῶ ὄντι μείζους ἐπέτεθησαν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων τοῖς ὑπηκόοις οἱ φόροι. 'Καὶ τὰ ἐπίλοιπα, φησὶ, τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτοῦ συνεπάτει.'*<sup>47</sup>

The writer disapproves of the fiscal administration of the Roman Empire, apparently protesting against the heavy taxation levied upon citizens at the time he was writing.<sup>48</sup> Zonaras tries to sharpen his critique of Roman emperors who put burdensome taxes on their subjects by adapting Theodoret's analysis:

The fact that it [the beast] was eating and making [people] thinner is understood to be the collection of taxes, because heavier taxes were levied upon subjects. These taxes feed and make emperors fat, while they make thin and impoverish the people from whom they are exacted. The beast treads on with his feet and destroys those men who do not bear to pay taxes, striving for their freedom.

<sup>46</sup> *Epitome*, III, 152.4–6, 306.3–308.2, 504.12–14, respectively.

<sup>47</sup> Theodoret of Cyrrhus, B. *Theodoretī episcopi Cyrensis commentarius in visiones Danielis prophetae*, PG, 81, 1420.17–23.

<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Theodoret was particularly concerned with the issue of taxation. Seven letters of the bishop addressed to public authorities ask for tax relief for the citizens of Cyrrhus: see F. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief Under Theodosius II* (Berkeley, 2006), 29, 146–8.



τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐσθίειν καὶ λεπτύνειν εἰς τὴν τῶν δασμῶν ἐξείληπται εἰσφορὰν, ὡς βαρυτέρων τοῖς ὑπηκόοις φόρων ἐπιτεθέντων, οἱ τοὺς βασιλεύοντας τρέφουσι καὶ παίνουσι, τοὺς δ' εἰσπραττομένους αὐτοὺς ἐκλεπτύνουσι πενητεύοντας. οἱ δὲ δασμοφορεῖν οὐκ ἠνείχοντο, τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἀντιποιούμενοι, τούτους τοῖς ποσὶ συνεπάτει τὸ θηρίον καὶ ἐξωλόθρευε.<sup>49</sup>

With a hint of sarcasm, the chronicler draws the mocking picture of emperors growing fat on the collection of taxes. This underscores that emperors imposed excessive taxes for their own personal gain, while forcing their subjects into circumstances of extreme poverty. The consequences for those who objected to such treatment on the part of the state were disastrous. Zonaras links economic prosperity with liberty: he implies that weighty taxation leads private men to lose their freedom and, by extension, shows an emperor to be an autocratic ruler with no concern for the well-being of his people.

According to the author, there was a certain set of principles that were once fundamental for the Byzantine political system, but have long ceased to be so. A valuable insight into these is provided by his commentary on the story of the astronomer Valens, who at the encaenia of Constantinople made a prediction about the longevity of the city.<sup>50</sup> This short extract from the *Epitome* is, along with the assessment of Alexios, among those usually exploited by scholars interested in Zonaras' political ideology.<sup>51</sup> Valens foretold that the newly built city would last for 696 years. Since the Byzantine capital had long outlived this by the time Zonaras was writing, the chronicler assumes that the prophecy was either false or intended to be taken figuratively. He believes that the astronomer might have meant those years when the customs of the polity were kept intact, the senate was treated with respect, private men prospered, and the administration of public affairs was lawful. Here, we can get a glimpse into Zonaras' vision of the ideal Byzantine state, with the author enumerating its four main principles. It is not at all clear how long it had been since these ideal circumstances had changed. One is given to understand that the principles on which the model state was based had apparently ceased to exist a long time before.

In elaboration, he gives us the description of a tyranny as well, a polity which does not possess any of these principles. Tyrants administer public affairs as if they were their own to satisfy their own pleasures, and also offer state funds to whomever they wish. The writer further states that tyrants treat their subjects not as shepherds tending their flock, but 'as thieves slaughtering the sheep and devouring their flesh, or even sucking the marrow from their bones' ('δίκην ληστῶν αὐτὰ καταθύνοντων τὰ πρόβατα καὶ τῶν σαρκῶν ἐμφορουμένων ἢ καὶ

<sup>49</sup> *Epitome*, I, 227.22–228.4.

<sup>50</sup> *Epitome*, III, 14.11–15.16.

<sup>51</sup> Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 47; Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom', 128–9; Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik', 330–1. The last two studies contain a translation of the extract.

αὐτοὺς ἐκμυζώντων τοὺς μυελούς').<sup>52</sup> With this striking metaphor, he insinuates that a tyrannical ruler is one whose actions include imposing extremely heavy taxes.

The descriptions of an ideal and a tyrannical state accord well with the series of charges laid by Zonaras against several emperors. The author uses the principles that, in his view, characterize an ideal and a tyrannical rulership as standards against which to measure Byzantine emperors. Alexios Komnenos is presented in the *Epitome* in precisely the terms befitting a tyrant: he managed state affairs as if he were handling his own business, granted public property to family members and squeezed his subjects by extracting money from them in various unjust ways. All these aspects add up to the image of an autocratic despot. Without explicitly labelling Alexios a tyrant, Zonaras evidently does consider him one, but leaves it up to his audience to infer for themselves whether this was indeed the truth.

It is interesting that another mention of tyranny, this time in combination with the senate, is located in Zonaras' interpretation of canon law. The writer makes an extensive analysis of the twenty-eighth canon of the Council of Chalcedon, which concerns the organization of the Church.<sup>53</sup> According to the canon, the see of New Rome was accorded equal prerogatives to those of Old Rome. The reason for this is that, just like Rome, Constantinople was also an imperial city and the seat of the senate. Commenting on this justification, Zonaras adds bitterly: 'Even though nowadays the first [kingship] has turned into tyranny, and the second [the senate] has been closed and abandoned' ('Εἰ καὶ νῦν ἡ μὲν εἰς τυραννίδα μετήμειπται, ἡ δὲ συγκέκλεισται καὶ ἐκλέλοιπέ').<sup>54</sup> Here, he admits much more openly than in his section about Valens' prediction that the Byzantium of his age has fallen short of the ideal state he envisioned. The contemporary political system is a tyranny, rather than a lawful kingship, and senators who, in his opinion, should be worthy of respect have been marginalized.

The two extracts above echo the writer's belief that the Byzantine polity has declined with the passage of time. Judging from Zonaras' severe attack on the Komnenian system of government, it is clear that, for him, this decay characterized the age in which he lived. It can be traced back much earlier, too, with a number of prior emperors implementing similar policies to those of Alexios. Like the Komnenian emperor, several rulers of the past would, for instance, spend enormous amounts of money or levy heavy taxes. What is striking in both the depiction of the ideal state in the passage about Valens and the short remark on the twenty-eighth canon of Chalcedon is the author's emphasis on the role of the senate. This attests to the high regard in which he held the senatorial class. Although Zonaras, in principle, condemns certain political practices and feels that the Empire has long fallen short of the ideal state described in the passage

<sup>52</sup> *Epitome*, III, 15.14–16.

<sup>53</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, II, 282–4.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

about Valens, he by no means rejects the institution of emperorship itself. He does not challenge the political and ideological construct of Byzantium. His narrative very much concentrates on assessing the competence and character of rulers. Like Niketas Choniates, through his critique of the emperors, Zonaras shares his ideas about how a monarch should exercise government, discussing the balance between the powers and duties that arise from the imperial office.

As a private individual, he feels he has the right to reprehend a ruler for ill behaviour or ill administration of state affairs. This idea is eloquently expressed in his exegesis of the eighty-fourth apostolic canon, according to which if one unjustly insults a ruler, one should be punished. Commenting on the canon, the author notes that: 'Nobody is allowed to insult emperors and lords. The canon, nevertheless, does not forbid [one] from rebuking them in the event that they do something improper, even if the words of rebuke are perhaps so fierce that they might be regarded as insults by those being rebuked' ('Υβρίζειν μὲν οὖν κεκώλυται πᾶς τις καὶ βασιλέας, καὶ ἄρχοντας ἐλέγχειν δὲ παρὰ τὸ προσήκον ποιούντας τι, οὐ κωλύεται, κἄν οἱ τῶν ἐλέγχων λόγοι, δριμύτεροι ὄντες ἴσως, εἰς ὕβριν τοῖς ἐλεγχομένοις λογιζονται').<sup>55</sup> At this point, Zonaras makes a crucial distinction between insulting and rebuking an emperor. He accepts that being offensive towards a ruler is forbidden, but highlights that rebuking him, even very harshly, is permissible. In view of this comment, one can surmise that the writer must have understood his *Kaiserkritik* as a form of 'ἐλεγχος', an assessment of what an emperor has done or failed to do and, consequently, as a rebuke to emperors who instigate unlawful policies.<sup>56</sup>

It is worth pointing out, however, that Zonaras does not lose sight of the fact that there can be no perfect rulers. Indicative of this is that not even Constantine the Great, traditionally the model emperor, is described solely in positive terms; he is said to have spent money lavishly and levied high taxes.<sup>57</sup> There is the other side of the coin, too. Readers of the *Epitome* may learn of the appealing qualities of emperors who are best known for something negative. The most characteristic example of this is the presentation of Julian, who, although condemned for his Hellenism, is acknowledged to be well-educated and temperate in his lifestyle.<sup>58</sup> Zonaras even tells us that the founder of the Komnenian dynasty exhibited some

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>56</sup> The term 'ἐλεγχος', common in Late Antique and Byzantine sources, can be used in various contexts. Apart from the evaluation and criticism of someone as a ruler, 'ἐλεγχος' often means the assessment of a person's religious beliefs against the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers. Hence, we sometimes find the title 'Ἐλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή' ('Assessment and refutation') in theological treatises: see, for example, the titles in: Nikephoros I, patriarch of Constantinople, *Refutatio et Eversio Definitionis Synodalis Anni 815*, ed. by J. Featherstone (Turnhout, 1997); Peter of Sicily, *Historia utilis et refutatio Manichaeorum vel Paulicianorum*, in 'Les sources grecques pour l'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure I. Pierre de Sicile. Histoire des Pauliciens', ed. by D. Papachryssanthou, *TM*, 4 (1970), 7–67.

<sup>57</sup> *Epitome*, III, 25.1–2.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.1–4.

remarkable personality traits.<sup>59</sup> We learn, among other things, that he was neither contemptuous nor arrogant, and that he was not excessively avaricious. He was merciful, moderate in temper, easy to approach, and would not rush to inflict punishment on his subjects. He took notice of and honoured men of virtue, and was not excessively solemn when talking to his entourage, so that they did not approach him with fear. The author clearly did not consider Alexios an altogether bad or unworthy emperor.<sup>60</sup> He recognizes that the Komnenian ruler did possess qualities that a competent ruler ought to have. Nevertheless, according to Zonaras, a leader should display other virtues in addition to these; he ought to be fair, care for his subjects, and preserve the customs of the polity.<sup>61</sup>

All these lead the writer to arrive at a significant conclusion at the end of his presentation of imperial history: that, to make an overall assessment of an emperor's character, one should take into account how he would conduct himself and act on most occasions during his reign. The relevant passage is as follows:

If someone seeks absolute perfection in emperors, I do not think that any of those who held the sceptre of the Romans from the beginning will be assessed as successful in everything, but the conduct of each emperor is characterized by the sum of his dispositions and deeds. For no one would ever seem either blameless or without faults. For this is of a more divine fate, but could never be part of human nature.

εἰ δὲ τὴν ἄγαν ἀκρίβειαν ζητοῖ τις ἐν τοῖς αὐτοκράτορσιν, οὐκ οἶμαι τινα τῶν ἀνέκαθεν τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐπιβεβηκότων ἡγεμονίας ἐν πᾶσιν εὐδοκιμηκότα κριθήσεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ πλεονάζοντος ἐν τοῖς ἤθεσι σφῶν καὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐκάστω ἢ πολιτεία κεχαρακτήριται. ἀνέγκλητος γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἂν ποτε δόξαι οὐδ' ἀμιγῆς τῆς χείρονος ἕξεως· θειοτέρας γὰρ τοῦτο μοίρας, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνης εἴη ἂν ποτε φύσεως.<sup>62</sup>

Bringing his narrative of the Empire to an end, the author presents his readers with the lesson he had derived himself: that no emperor in the course of the Empire's history was excellent in every respect. This is natural, according to him, because, like all human beings, rulers have flaws. Surprisingly, despite the vehemence of his criticism, particularly against Alexios Komnenos, Zonaras ultimately takes a lenient approach to the way in which emperors should be judged. His conclusion can also be taken as a hint about those authors of historical accounts who paint hagiographical pictures of their benefactors, concealing or

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 765.5–766.3.

<sup>60</sup> This is also eloquently stated as the chronicler concludes his critique of Alexios: 'but one could not characterize the Komnenian as a bad emperor either' ('ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μέντοι φαῦλον εἶποι τις τὸν Κομνηνὸν αὐτοκράτορά'): *Epitome*, III, 767.11–12.

<sup>61</sup> *Epitome*, III, 766.4–11.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 767.12–19.

undermining their subjects' objectionable actions. The chronicler's unstated message to his audience is that they should treat such accounts with caution.

## 4.2 The Ideological Context

Building on the observations made so far in this chapter, I want to look into some additional passages which are revealing of the author's ideological sympathies. The first is the section of the chronicle in which Zonaras talks about the social strata created by Romulus once he became king. In the following segment, Zonaras explains how the choice of the patricians was made: 'From those most notable for their family, intelligence and way of life, he [Romulus] chose a hundred senators, naming them patricians' ('τῶν μέντοι περιφανεστέρων γένει τε καὶ συνέσει καὶ βίου αἰρέσει ἑκατὸν ἀπέδειξε βουλευτάς, πατρικίους ὀνομάσας αὐτούς').<sup>63</sup> This statement should be compared to Zonaras' original source, the Plutarchean *Romulus*: 'He [Romulus] proclaimed a hundred noble men senators, and called them patricians' ('ἑκατὸν δὲ τοὺς ἀρίστους ἀπέδειξε βουλευτάς, καὶ αὐτοὺς μὲν πατρικίους [...] προσηγόρευσεν').<sup>64</sup> The chronicler modifies and expands the term 'noble' that he finds in Plutarch's narrative. This is an enlightening alteration because it reflects Zonaras' own understanding of nobility. His paradigm of nobility includes prominent lineage, remarkable intellectual qualities, and exemplary conduct. The writer had a broad concept of the aristocratic class in mind, one not associated strictly with a man's descent, but also with his intellect.

Immediately afterwards, he explains why the class of patricians was given this name. One of the reasons, according to Zonaras, was that 'for themselves, each one could prove that their own fathers came from eminent families' ('ὅτι αὐτοὶ πατέρας ἑαυτῶν ἀποδεικνύειν ἠδύναντο ἕκαστος ἐκ γένους ὄντες γνωρίμου').<sup>65</sup> In the *Romulus*, Plutarch writes that it was 'because they could tell who their own fathers were' ('αὐτοὺς ἔχοντας ἑαυτῶν ἀποδείξαι πατέρας').<sup>66</sup> The chronicler adds the detail about the illustrious origin of the patricians. He paraphrases Plutarch's text to point out that patricians were given their title because their *patres*, their fathers, were of distinguished extraction. In this way, he aims to emphasize that,

<sup>63</sup> *Epitome*, II, 10.17–19.

<sup>64</sup> Plutarch, *Romulus*, 49.21–3.

<sup>65</sup> *Epitome*, II, 11.1–2. The syntax of this short segment is problematic. It seems to me that the accusative 'πατέρας' is the subject of the infinitive 'ἀποδεικνύειν', just as the word 'πατέρας' is the subject of 'ἀποδείξαι' in the Plutarchean text. In this case, we would expect 'ὄντας' to be in the accusative, rather than to have 'ὄντες' in the nominative. In the edition of the *Epitome* by Dindorf, we also find 'ὄντες': *Epitome historiarum*, ed. by Dindorf, II, 91.24–6. I believe the use of the participle in the nominative, instead of the accusative, is a mistake by either a scribe or Zonaras himself.

<sup>66</sup> Plutarch, *Romulus*, 49.26–7. The translation is taken from *Plutarch: Romulus*, in *Lives, Volume I Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola*, trans. into English by B. Perrin (Cambridge, MA, 1914), 125.

following the establishment of the senatorial class, its members have been aristocrats; they were by no means a random group of people. Zonaras here provides an additional reason why senators are worthy of respect—their noble historical origins.

In addition, one can identify the chronicler's ideological sympathies when noting Zonaras' telling amendment to a passage of Theophanes. This passage is the speech which Justin II (r. 565–574) publicly addressed to Tiberius II (r. 578–582) when he named him as his successor.<sup>67</sup> The speech, which was first recorded by Theophylaktos Simokattes and was then copied by later authors,<sup>68</sup> Theophanes included, contains advice to Tiberius about how an emperor should rule. In the *Epitome*, one can read that an emperor should 'allow men of wealth to enjoy their properties without being subject to envy' ('τοῖς εὐποροῦσιν ἀπολαύειν τῶν οἰκείων ἀνεπιφθόνως παραχωρεῖν').<sup>69</sup> The original segment in Theophanes' chronicle is 'those who have properties should enjoy them' ('οἱ ἔχοντες οὐσίας ἀπολαυέτωσαν αὐτῶν').<sup>70</sup> Zonaras adds the adverb 'ἀνεπιφθόνως' to the text of his source to emphasize that emperors should not deprive private people of their money out of jealousy,<sup>71</sup> for instance by means of confiscation or heavy taxation. More importantly, he narrows the category of people who should be allowed to enjoy their possessions. Theophanes speaks generically of people who have property, without taking their social standing into consideration. Slightly changing the text of his source, Zonaras conveys the message that a ruler ought to protect the property of the members of the upper class specifically.

A further passage that is of interest concerns the beginning of Leo III's campaign against icons. Basing his account primarily on George the Monk's chronicle, Zonaras tells his readers that twelve men, all extremely educated and knowledgeable, resided in an imperial house in the basilica near the Chalkoprateia and provided the emperor with advice.<sup>72</sup> After launching his policy of iconoclasm, Leo asked for their opinion. Here follows what we read in the *Epitome*:

<sup>67</sup> This part of the *Epitome* is commented on Kazhdan, 'Social Views', 26.

<sup>68</sup> For Justin's speech, see S. Efthymiadis, 'A Historian and His Tragic Hero: A Literary Reading of Theophylakt Simokatta's Ecumenical History', in *History as Literature*, ed. by Macrides, 169–86, at 177–8.

<sup>69</sup> *Epitome*, III, 178.14–15. <sup>70</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 249.2–3.

<sup>71</sup> The emotion of envy ('φθόνος') in Byzantium has been discussed at length by Martin Hinterberger in several studies. According to Hinterberger, the emergence of envy was connected to social mobility in Byzantium, as it fostered rivalry and competition. Envy also has connotations connecting it to the devil: M. Hinterberger, *Phthonos. Missgunst, Neid und Eifersucht in der byzantinischen Literatur* (Wiesbaden, 2013); M. Hinterberger, 'Envy and Nemesis in the Vita Basili and Leo the Deacon: Literary Mimesis or Something More?', in *History as Literature*, ed. by Macrides, 187–203; M. Hinterberger, 'Phthonos als treibende Kraft in Prodomos, Manasses und Bryennios', *Medioevo Graeco*, 11 (2011), 1–24; M. Hinterberger, 'Emotions in Byzantium', in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. by James, 123–34, at 130–2.

<sup>72</sup> *Epitome*, III, 259.18–260.9.

And having summoned the men, he communicated to them his wicked decision about the holy icons. Not only did they not agree with him, but they attempted to entirely change his decision, in some way stroking the beast which bears the name 'lion' and chanting magical words for his deliverance, in some way going against him more intensely and rebuking him regarding his impiety. Like a cobra he blocked his ears and was neither listening to the voice of those who chanted incantations, nor was he being healed by the wise men. [...] But he [Leo] ordered that much wood, which was easy to ignite a fire, should be collected, put around the residence and kindled during the night. He thus burnt the residence down along with the books, and also those wise and respectable men.

καὶ τοὺς ἀνδρας μεταστειλάμενος τὴν περὶ τῶν σεβαστῶν εἰκόνων γνώμην αὐτοῦ τὴν πονηρὰν αὐτοῖς ἐκοινώσατο. οἱ δὲ οὐχ ὅσον οὐχ ὠμοδόξουν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν μεταστῆσαι τῆς γνώμης ταύτης ἐπεχείρουν ὀλοσχερῶς, πῆ μὲν καταψῶντες τὸν θῆρα τὸν λεοντόνυμον καὶ κατεπάδοντες αὐτοῦ τὰ σωτήρια, πῆ δὲ γενναιότερον ἀντιβαίνοντες καὶ διελέγχοντες τὴν ἀσέβειαν. ὁ δὲ ὡσεὶ ἀσπίς ἔβυε τὰ ὄψα καὶ φωνῆς ἐπαδόντων οὐκ ἤκουεν οὐδ' ἐφάρμακεύετο παρὰ τῶν σοφῶν.<sup>73</sup> [...] αὐτὸς δὲ κελεύσας εὐπρηστον ἕλην συναχθῆναι πολλὴν καὶ πέριξ τοῦ οἴκου τεθεῖσαν ἀναφθῆναι νυκτός, οὕτω τὸν τε οἶκον σὺν ταῖς βίβλοις καὶ τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐκείνους ἀνδρας καὶ σεβασμίους κατέκαυσε.<sup>74</sup>

George the Monk writes in the corresponding section of his work:

Having summoned them, the most savage beast and vulgar man of evil name was trying to convince [them] to agree to his neglect of God. As they did not accept it but very much rebuked him regarding his impiety, he ordered that they be dragged dishonourably and be confined in the same place of the school. When this had happened, in the night, after sending out again some chiefs of the night watch and cruel men, the wild monster ordered that much wood to be collected and, once the wood had been set alight, the men along with the dwellings and books and all the rest of their belongings to be burnt.

τούτους ὁ ἀγριώτατος θῆρ καὶ δυσώνυμος βάνανσος προσκαλεσάμενος ἐπειράτο πείθειν συνθέσθαι αὐτοῦ τῇ ἀθείᾳ. τῶν δὲ τοῦτο μὴ καταδεξαμένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον ἐλεγξάντων αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀσέβειαν, προσέταξε συρομένους αὐτοὺς ἀτίμως ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ τοῦ διδασκαλείου αὐτῶν ἐγκλεισθῆναι. τούτου δὲ γενομένου τῆ νυκτὶ πάλιν ἀποστείλας ὁ ἀνήμερος δράκων νυκτεπάρχους τινὰς καὶ ἀπηνεῖς ἀνδρας προσέταξε συναχθῆναι πλῆθος ξύλων καὶ τούτων ὑπαφθέντων κατακαῆναι τοὺς ἀνδρας σὺν τῶν οἰκημάτων καὶ τῶν βιβλίων καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν αὐτοῖς ὑπαρχόντων.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> See Psalms 58.5–6. <sup>74</sup> *Epitome*, III, 260.10–17, 261.2–5.

<sup>75</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, II, 742.9–18. The story of Leo's twelve wise advisers appears in other sources too, such as the chronicles of Symeon the Logothete and George Kedrenos: see Symeon



Zonaras expounds the text of his source to highlight two points. The first concerns the intellectual capacities of Leo's advisers. The writer adds two epithets about them in this extract: wise ('παρὰ τῶν σοφῶν', 'τοὺς σοφοὺς'), a characterization which appears twice; and respected ('σεβασμίους'). These men were apparently worthy of respect because of their sagacity and level of education. There is no mention of their descent. Second, Zonaras inserts a couple of lines not found in George the Monk's text ('ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν μεταστῆσαι [...] τὰ σωτήρια'), aiming to stress that the twelve counsellors made a great effort to dissuade the emperor from banishing the icons. Not only did they attempt to change his mind, but they also reproved him for his lack of piety. Both texts mention the concept of ἔλεγχος ('διελέγχοντες', 'ἐλεγξάντων'), but Zonaras purposely adds that the advisers displayed great bravery in reprimanding the emperor. These points illustrate how an educated man close to the emperor might be able to prevent him from pursuing the wrong course of action.<sup>76</sup> Zonaras, as we see, lays the emphasis on the idea of nobility of intellect.

A short extract that should be given attention in addition to this one is found in Zonaras' portrayal of the emperor Constantine X Doukas (r. 1059–1067): 'Despite the fact that he [Constantine] was not versed in letters, he loved them and also respected learned men, and used to say that he wished to become known much more for his scholarly knowledge rather than for his kingship' ('λόγοις δὲ οὐχ ὠμίληκώς ἡγάπα τούτους καὶ τοὺς λογίους ἐσέβητο, καὶ ἔλεγε βούλεσθαι μᾶλλον ἐκ λόγων ἢ τῆς βασιλείας γνωρίζεσθαι').<sup>77</sup> This part of the chronicle depends on Psellos' *Chronography*. The relevant segment of Psellos is as follows:

the Logothete, *Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae chronicon*, ed. by S. Wahlgren (Berlin, 2006), 184.76–9; George Kedrenos, *Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae ope*, ed. by I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), 796.2–6. The *Epitome* bears striking linguistic similarities to the accounts of both George the Monk and Symeon the Logothete. Zonaras seems to follow primarily George the Monk though, not only because there is an almost identical phrase in both texts ('διελέγχοντες τὴν ἀσέβειαν' in Zonaras, 'ἐλεγξάντων αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀσέβειαν' in George the Monk) but also because there is a piece of information in the *Epitome*, namely that the burning of the house and the wise men occurred during the night, which can be found in George the Monk, but not in Symeon the Logothete. Zonaras might have also consulted Kedrenos' text, as both chroniclers note that the fire was ignited 'around' the residence of the twelve men, a detail that is not present in either George the Monk or Symeon the Logothete. What should be underlined is that the additions, which, as will be shown, Zonaras made to this story are all original to the author.

<sup>76</sup> Zonaras' contemporary audience would have been familiar with the theme of wise intellectuals as advisers to rulers, as it was a popular topos in eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantine literature. Stories of wise *literati* offering advice to kings and princes feature, for instance, in prose narratives of Eastern origin that were translated into Greek during these centuries, such as *The Book of Syntipas the Philosopher*, *Stephanites and Ichmelates*, and *The Book of Aesop*: see I. Toth, 'Fighting With Tales: 2 The Byzantine Book of Syntipas the Philosopher', in *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond*, ed. by C. Cupane and B. Krönung (Leiden, 2016), 380–400, particularly at 382, 390–2. In works of a historical character, the theme of an intellectual's role as a counsellor to a ruler emerges, most notably, in Psellos' *Chronography*, where it is employed by Psellos as a means to promote and polish his image: see, for instance, Psellos, *Chronography*, 182.9–183.11 (Book 6, chapter 168); 202.1–11 (Book 6, chapter 216); 226.1–16 (Book 7, chapter 39); 248.3–9 (Book 7, chapter 86).

<sup>77</sup> *Epitome*, III, 682.8–9. In this section, Zonaras plays on the words 'λόγος' and 'λόγιος'.



'He [Constantine] very much devoted himself to letters. He said: "Would that I became known from my scholarly knowledge, rather than my kingship"' ('τοῖς δὲ λόγοις ἐξόχως προσκείμενος, ὠφελον» ἔλεγεν «ἐκ τούτου, ἢ τῆς βασιλείας γνωρίζεσθαι').<sup>78</sup> In contrast to Psellos, Zonaras notes that Constantine was not an educated man. Also, the brief sentence inserted by Zonaras about the respect shown by Constantine to men of letters is absent from Psellos' account. It is evident that it was added by the author to provide an example of an emperor who, despite not being a learned man himself, appreciated and honoured the intellectuals in his entourage.

Extracts such as these testify to the chronicler's ideological orientation. There can be hardly any doubt that he favoured noblemen of birth and men of letters, two social groups affected badly by the Komnenian style of government. Prior to Alexios Komnenos' accession to the throne, learned men were offered greater chance to attain either high positions in the state bureaucracy or prestigious offices in the imperial court.<sup>79</sup> Zonaras alters or expands on his source texts in order to bestow importance on the aristocratic and intellectual elite that should surround a ruler. He attempts to promote the idea of a group of noblemen and learned men around the emperor, perhaps counterbalancing the dominance of those related to the Komnenoi. He implicitly presents his own alternative here, namely that men of noble birth as well as men of education are able to offer great services to the emperor. They should therefore be given the chance to do so, instead of being sidelined.

It is evident that Zonaras' idea of 'upper class' includes the families of the traditional aristocracy, but also those who occupied important positions thanks to their level of education. The chronicler himself, who had a distinguished career as a judge, belonged to the second group. As was seen in the first chapter, moreover, he came from a family whose members were apparently well-educated and had worked in the higher echelons of the civil administration.<sup>80</sup> He clearly believes that the members of his own social group belonged to the elite class on the basis of their ability.

Overall, as has been shown in this chapter, Zonaras condemns in principle those practices that are not in line with the concept of the model state he envisions. In his view, the foundation of an ideal state is the preservation of the traditional customs of the polity, showing respect to the senate, the prosperity of private individuals and the lawful administration of state affairs. Using these principles as a compass, Zonaras evaluates an emperor's efficiency in the administration of public affairs. He touches upon issues that relate to the nature

<sup>78</sup> Psellos, *Chronography*, 262.7–8 (Book 7, chapter 121).

<sup>79</sup> Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 189. <sup>80</sup> See p. 7 of this book.

of the imperial authority and the constitutional rights of a monarch, without, however, questioning the authority of the imperial office. By amending the relevant passages of his sources, Zonaras gives prominence to the qualities exhibited by aristocrats as well as men of culture, and thus argues in favour of an enhanced role for these groups at the imperial court.

# 5

## Zonaras' Keen Interest in Roman Antiquity

Zonaras' great interest in the Roman origins of Byzantium is a notable feature of his chronicle. To account for the writer's emphasis on the world of Old Rome, one can examine his interests first against the intellectual and literary background of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and then against the historical background of the period.

### 5.1 Zonaras' Interest in the Roman Past Within the Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Intellectual and Literary Context

In his article on *Kaiserkritik*, Magdalino was the first to note the considerable interest in Roman antiquity at the imperial court of Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071–1078).<sup>1</sup> Echoes of this attention to the Roman world can be found in several works dedicated to the emperor by educated and ambitious men of the time. John Xiphilinos wrote his epitome of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* for Michael Doukas.<sup>2</sup> The *Ponema Nomikon*, a legal textbook beginning with the Roman Republic, was produced by Michael Attaleiates for the same emperor.<sup>3</sup> Michael Psellos, Michael Doukas' tutor and close confidant (if we are to believe the *Chronography*), dedicated to his disciple numerous didactic poems about a variety of subjects.<sup>4</sup> Among these is the so-called *Synopsis Legum*, which is in essence a manual explaining Latin juridical terms.<sup>5</sup> Psellos' *Historia Syntomos*, which starts from the mythical foundation of Rome by Romulus, was most likely intended for the same emperor as well.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik', 343–4.

<sup>2</sup> Xiphilinos himself mentions in his text that the *Epitome* was composed during the reign of Michael Doukas: Xiphilinos, *Epitome of Dio*, 526.8–10 (chapter 87). For Xiphilinos' treatment of Cassius Dio, see Millar, *Study*, 2–3, 195–203.

<sup>3</sup> The proem of the text is preceded by a book epigram in which Attaleiates reports that the work was commissioned by the emperor Michael Doukas and was produced in the third year of his reign, in 1073: see Attaleiates, *Πρόνυμα νομικόν*, 411.4–8. See also Krallis, *Politics*, xxi–iv; Wolska-Conus, 'L'école', 97–101.

<sup>4</sup> Bernard, *Poetry*, 37–8, 127–8, 216–17, 243 and 247.

<sup>5</sup> For an extensive analysis of the text, see Wolska-Conus, 'L'école', 79–97.

<sup>6</sup> See, in particular, Ljubarskij, 'Some Notes'.

References to ancient Roman history are found in numerous eleventh- and twelfth-century texts, with writers deriving material from the early days of Rome, from Republican Rome and from the Principate. Magdalino has postulated that the revival of interest in the Roman origins of the Empire relates to two eleventh-century developments: the boost given to legal studies under Constantine Monomachos; and the shift towards the Roman past noted in the West, in 'parallel and in reaction to' which Roman antiquarianism was developed in Byzantium.<sup>7</sup> Macrides has linked the twelfth-century *renovatio* promoted by the Komnenian dynasty to the Byzantine quest for Roman antecedents, particularly those of Justinian I's time.<sup>8</sup> The attention to the Roman origins of Byzantium came into focus again in 2006 with a study by Athanasios Markopoulos. Giving an overview of the Byzantines' engagement with Roman antiquities during the middle Byzantine period, Markopoulos proposed a new approach to the phenomenon. In his opinion, the ripening interest in Roman history during the eleventh and twelfth centuries was a culmination of intellectual processes whose origins can already be traced back to the patriarch Photios' attention to the Roman past in the mid-ninth century.<sup>9</sup> The phenomenon of Roman antiquarianism has also been noted by Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis, who have both identified a strong interest in the Roman Republic in particular during the period.<sup>10</sup>

Various eleventh-century sources indicate the contemporary need for a good command of Latin for operating in the field of jurisprudence. The emperor Constantine Monomachos founded a law school as part of the extensive complex of the monastery of St George at Mangana. According to a Novel probably promulgated in 1047 by the accomplished poet John Mauropous,<sup>11</sup> John VIII Xiphilinos, the patriarch of Constantinople, received the title of *nomophylax* and was appointed head of the school. In the Novel, Mauropous makes heavy use of the Justinianic corpus of laws, in which he found many legal terms that originated from Latin.<sup>12</sup> The law school of Constantine Monomachos was apparently short-lived and had no lasting effect.<sup>13</sup> Still, the details that point to the importance of Latin within the school are worth noting. The *nomophylax* of the school was

<sup>7</sup> Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik', 343. See also Angold, *History*, 65.

<sup>8</sup> Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom', 121–2.

<sup>9</sup> Markopoulos, 'Antiquarianism'.

<sup>10</sup> Kaldellis, 'Equivalence', 21; Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, 62; Krallis, "'Democratic" Action'.

<sup>11</sup> For the latest edition of the Novel, see *Novella constitutio saec. XI medii*, ed. by A. Salač (Prague 1954). The Novel has come down to us in a *codex unicus*, the Vat. gr. 676 (ff. 280<sup>v</sup>–292<sup>v</sup>), which dates to the late eleventh century and contains John Mauropous' works: see D. Bianconi, "'Piccolo assaggio di abbondante fragranza". Giovanni Mauropode e il Vat. gr. 676', *JÖB*, 61 (2011), 89–103.

<sup>12</sup> S. Troiannos, 'Η Νεαρά Κωνσταντίνου του Μονομάχου: ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναδείξει καὶ προβολῇ τοῦ διδασκάλου τῶν νόμων', *ByzSynt*, 22 (2012), 243–63, at 262.

<sup>13</sup> M. Jeffreys, 'Michael Psellos and the Monastery', in *The Letters of Psellos: Cultural Networks and Historical Realities*, ed. by M. Jeffreys and M. Lauxtermann (Oxford, 2017), 42–58 (at 43) and 443–4 ('Summaries', excursus 17.3 and excursus 17.4); M. T. Fögen, 'Modell und Mythos. Die Rechtsfakultäten von Konstantinopel, Neapel und Bologna im Mittelalter', *Rechtshistorisches Journal*, 15 (1996), 181–204, at 185.

required to know both Greek and Latin. One might presume that Roman law and Latin would also be subjects on the school's curriculum.<sup>14</sup>

The importance of Latin to the legal profession is also stressed by the author named John Nomophylax in his scholia to the *Basilika*. The author, whom Wanda Wolska-Conus has identified as Xiphilinos,<sup>15</sup> criticized the compilers of the *Basilika* for having made mistakes in the translation of the Latin works due to their poor knowledge of the language. A second text attributed to Xiphilinos by Wolska-Conus is the *Meditatio de nudis pactis*.<sup>16</sup> Written by a judge in the Constantinopolitan court for his peers, the work shows a clear interest in Roman law and Latin legal terminology. Although the extent to which eleventh-century jurists, Xiphilinos included, knew and understood Latin is open to debate,<sup>17</sup> repeated references to the use of Latin by the administrators of justice reflect a renewal of interest in the language, at least among high-ranking state officials. This observation indicates that Zonaras' general interest in Latin terminology, which is evident in both his chronicle and in his commentary on canon law,<sup>18</sup> was apparently shared by some of his predecessors in the field of jurisprudence.

The topic of Latin legal terms captured Psellos' attention as well. His work *Synopsis Legum* was probably produced not later than 1075.<sup>19</sup> Although the work is introduced by the author as 'a comprehensible compendium of laws' ('εὐθιγὰ τὸν τὶ σύνταγμα τῶν νόμων'),<sup>20</sup> it is in fact a manual focusing on legal terminology. To explain basic concepts of jurisprudence to his addressee, Psellos uses numerous Latin terms, for which he generally provides the Greek equivalents.<sup>21</sup> Wishing his student to gain a sense of historical scope, he makes various references to ancient Roman law. Psellos' practice of using legal terms in Latin can also be identified in his shorter juridical treatises.<sup>22</sup>

Psellos' keen interest in Roman antiquities may be seen too in his historical works. In the *Chronography*, the author shows an appreciation of well-known figures of imperial Rome, such as the philosopher Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180),

<sup>14</sup> Kazhdan and Wharton-Epstein, *Change*, 122.

<sup>15</sup> See Wolska-Conus, 'L'école', 13–31.

<sup>16</sup> *La Meditatio de nudis pactis*, ed. by H. Monnier and G. Plato (Paris, 1915; repr. 1974). See also B. Stolte, 'The Byzantine Law of Obligations', in *Obligations in Roman Law: Past, Present and Future*, ed. by T. McGinn (Ann Arbor, 2012), 320–33, at 327–31; Wolska-Conus, 'L'école', 37–53.

<sup>17</sup> Markopoulos, 'Antiquarianism', 291–2; N. Van der Wal, 'Problèmes linguistiques rencontrés par les juristes byzantins', in *Non Nova, Sed Novae: mélanges de civilisation médiévale*, ed. by M. Gosman and J. Van Os (Groningen, 1984), 279–83.

<sup>18</sup> See p. 16 of this book.

<sup>19</sup> Wolska-Conus, 'L'école', 79. As numerous of Psellos' didactic and introductory works, the text is written in political verse and comprises 1406 verses: M. Jeffreys, 'The Nature and Origins of Political Verse', *DOP*, 28 (1974), 141–95, at 164–6.

<sup>20</sup> Psellos, *Synopsis Legum*, 124.7.

<sup>21</sup> For example, see *ibid.*, 127.95–128.108, 128.112–14.

<sup>22</sup> See G. Weiss, *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel des Schriften des Michael Psellos* (Munich, 1973), 284–302, which contains five edited treatises.

the second Antonine emperor.<sup>23</sup> Mocking the emperor Romanos III Argyros (r. 1028–1034), for instance, Psellos draws a parallel between the emperor and Marcus Aurelius, saying that Romanos Argyros aspired to emulate the first Roman emperor, Augustus, and the emperors of the Antonine dynasty, particularly Marcus Aurelius. Consequently, Romanos Argyros involved himself 'in the study of letters and the science of war' ('τῆς τε περὶ τοὺς λόγους σπουδῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ ὄπλα φροντίδος').<sup>24</sup> Psellos says elsewhere that the image of Marcus Aurelius, 'the most philosophical among kings' ('τὸν ἐν βασιλεῦσι φιλοσοφώτατον'), appealed to Constantine Monomachos as well.<sup>25</sup> Monomachos would listen carefully to Psellos' lectures and take notes, wishing to imitate a similar practice by Marcus Aurelius.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, in cases when Psellos wished to make a remark about an emperor's military skills and either mock or praise him, he would draw on the history of imperial Rome and was likely to use, among others, the exempla of Trajan and Hadrian. Narrating Romanos Argyros' military campaign to Syria in the *Chronography*, he notes ironically that Romanos was determined to go to war in an attempt to accomplish deeds similar to those of the memorable rulers Trajan, Hadrian, and, further back in time, Augustus, Julius Caesar, and Alexander the Great.<sup>27</sup> The same Roman exempla are found in Psellos' favourable portrayal of the caesar John Doukas, who admired Trajan and Hadrian.<sup>28</sup> The caesar, according to Psellos, even studied their accomplishments, as they were transmitted by extant *strategika*, manuals of strategies and military tactics, and the works of Aelian and Apollodorus.<sup>29</sup>

*Historia Syntomos* exemplifies Psellos' quest for Roman antecedents. The chronicle extends from the time of Romulus to the reign of the emperor Basil II. Interestingly enough, it is the only work of the middle Byzantine period in which the narrative begins with the mythical founder of Rome.<sup>30</sup> What is important in this regard is that *Historia Syntomos* sets a precedent for Zonaras'

<sup>23</sup> Cresci, 'Exempla', 131–2.

<sup>24</sup> Psellos, *Chronography*, 31.7–8 (Book 3, chapter 2); *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, trans. into English by E. Sewter (Harmondsworth, 1979), 39.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Psellos, *Τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐπιτάφιος εἰς τὸν μακαριώτατον πατριάρχην κύρ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ἐφελῖνον*, in *Michael Psellus Orationes funebres*, ed. by I. Polemis (Berlin, 2014), 115–69, at 129.3–4 (chapter 11).

<sup>26</sup> Monomachos' environment seems to have promoted the image of the philosopher-king for the emperor and his identification, particularly with Marcus Aurelius, was conducive to their aims: M. Angold, 'Imperial Renewal and Orthodox Reaction: Byzantium in the 11th Century', in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium 4th–13th Centuries*, ed. by P. Magdalino (Aldershot, 1994), 231–46, esp. 235.

<sup>27</sup> Psellos, *Chronography*, 35.17–35.21 (Book 3, chapter 8).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.8 (Book 7, chapter 180).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.10–13 (Book 7, chapter 180).

<sup>30</sup> Only the sixth-century antiquarian author John Lydos chose a similar starting point for his work *On the Magistracies*. This, however, is a work of a different character; it is a treatise focusing on the history of late Roman bureaucracy: John Lydos, *Ioannes Lydos On Powers or the Magistracies of the Roman State*, ed. by A. Bandy (Philadelphia, 1983). Unlike Psellos, Byzantine chroniclers would usually start their accounts with the Creation of the world.

chronicle, in which the Roman section begins more or less at the same point.<sup>31</sup> Both texts echo to some extent the idea that a chronicle could relate the history of the Roman state since its foundation without intimately connecting it to the early Christian past. Psellos' aim, of course, was not to compose a world history, but to focus on the Roman Empire, presenting 'a short history of those who reigned in Elder Rome and later in Newer Rome' (*Ἱστορία σύντομος τῶν παρὰ τῆν πρεσβυτέρων Ῥώμην βασιλευσάντων καὶ αὐθις τῆν νεωτέρων*).<sup>32</sup> The fact that about half the text is devoted to the subject of Rome is likely to indicate that the author wished to lay equal emphasis on Rome and Constantinople.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, the author follows the long tradition of chronicle writing and gives a succinct account of the Roman Republic.<sup>34</sup> He deals with the Republican era in only seven chapters (chapters 8 to 14), each dedicated to a set of consuls, from Iunius Brutus and Tarquinius Collatinus in 509 BC, to Valerius Poplicola IV and Lucretius Tricipitinus II in 504 BC. He then skips Republican Rome and continues his history with the deeds of Julius Caesar. From that point onwards, each chapter narrates the reign of an emperor. It has been argued that the Republican system of government, in which the consuls, the highest elected officials, were in charge for only a year, would make little sense to a Byzantine audience.<sup>35</sup> Psellos himself explains the reason why he decided to omit the achievements of the consuls; he wished to urge the recipient of his work (his student Michael Doukas) to choose specific models of kingship over others.<sup>36</sup> Such models could not be found within the context of Republican Rome; the Republican period lacked 'governing continuity' (*συνέχειαν ἀρχικὴν*),<sup>37</sup> to use Psellos' words, and consequently did not provide examples of rulers who remained in power for a long time, as the emperor Michael Doukas was supposed to do. To offer such examples to his disciple, Psellos had to look to the world of the Roman *imperium*.

Nevertheless, Psellos' view of the Roman Republic as a political system is not negative. It is illustrated in his brief account of the consulship of Valerius Poplicola and Lucretius Tricipitinus, in which the author emphatically states: 'They [the consuls] brought peace during that year and increased the numbers of the armies for the Romans; for the Romans, aristocratic consulship was proved better than kingship' (*Ἐιρηνικὸν τε τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἐκείνον συντετελέκασιν καὶ τὰ πλήθη τῶν στρατευμάτων Ῥωμαίοις συνηξήκασιν καὶ <ῆ> ἀριστοκρατικὴ ὑπατεία κρείττων τῆς βασιλείας Ῥωμαίοις ἀποδέδεικτο*).<sup>38</sup> The results of the consulship of Valerius Poplicola and Lucretius Tricipitinus were beneficial to the state. The historian's

<sup>31</sup> In the Roman section, Zonaras begins his account with the arrival of Aeneas to Italy. The story of Romulus and Remus starts after approximately three pages of printed text in the edition of the *Epitome* we use.

<sup>32</sup> Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, 1–2 (title). <sup>33</sup> Dželebdžić, *Ἱστορία σύντομος*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Jeffreys, 'Attitudes', 206–7. <sup>35</sup> Scott, 'Classical Tradition', 68; Jeffreys, 'Attitudes', 207.

<sup>36</sup> Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, 10.61–3. <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.61. <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.20–3.

favourable attitude towards aristocratic consulship has been suggested as the most important reason why Psellos did not opt to omit the history of Republican Rome altogether.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, an extensive analysis of the Roman Republic would not have served Psellos' didactic purposes in *Historia Syntomos*, which was to seek imperial models for imitation.

In his epitome of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, Xiphilinos focuses on the leading politicians and emperors of ancient Rome. The author derives material from Books 36 to 80 of Dio's history, thus covering the period from 69 BC to 229. In a short excerpt from Xiphilinos' work, we find his reason for epitomizing Dio's work: 'because our own life and polity depends a great deal upon those times' ('διὰ τὸ πάμπολυ ἀπηρτηῆσθαι τῶν καιρῶν ἐκείνων τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς βίον καὶ τὸ πολίτευμα').<sup>40</sup> Xiphilinos thus underlines how important he believes it is for the Byzantines to know about Republican and imperial Rome. For him, this period is ultimately linked to the contemporary political situation: he clearly sees some sort of continuity between the political institutions of ancient Rome and those of eleventh-century Byzantium. As we shall soon see, Zonaras' approach to the Republican past of the Roman state is not far from Xiphilinos'.<sup>41</sup> Zonaras, too, understands the Republic as part of the development of the current political system. Dio's constitutional debates about republicanism attracted limited attention from Xiphilinos. According to an analysis by Mallan, Xiphilinos was keen to abridge heavily lengthy speeches included in Dio's account of the Republic, but seems to have maintained long sections in his narrative of the imperial period. Xiphilinos primarily draws his attention to elements of the emperors' characters and biographies, thus maintaining the tenth- and eleventh-century biographical style of history-writing.<sup>42</sup> The fact that he was writing at the imperial court must also have had a significant impact on Xiphilinos' decision to omit or abridge sections of a republican nature.

Xiphilinos was not the only author who took a great interest in Dio's work during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Kekaumenos, a close contemporary of Xiphilinos and a high-ranking military official, made use of the *Roman History* in his *Strategikon*, produced in the mid-1070s.<sup>43</sup> In his *Histories*, the twelfth-century scholar John Tzetzes repeatedly names Cassius Dio as one of his sources,<sup>44</sup> while

<sup>39</sup> D. Dželebdžić, 'Η δημοκρατική Ρώμη στην πολιτική σκέψη του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού', ZRVI, 42 (2005), 23–33.

<sup>40</sup> Xiphilinos, *Epitome of Dio*, 526.4–6 (chapter 87). See also Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, 63; Krallis, 'Democratic' Action', 49–50.

<sup>41</sup> See p. 104 of this book.

<sup>42</sup> Mallan, 'Style', 616–21. For the developments in the genre of historiography, see Markopoulos, 'Narrative Historiography'.

<sup>43</sup> Kekaumenos, *Strategikon* ed. by M. D. Spadaro, in *Raccomandazioni e consigli di un galantuomo* (Alessandria, 1998), 44–242. For Kekaumenos' use of Dio, see C. Roueché, 'The Literary Background of Kekaumenos', in *Literacy*, ed. by Holmes and Waring, 111–38, at 124–6.

<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, John Tzetzes, *Ioannis Tzetzae historiae*, ed. by P. Leone (Naples, 1968), verses 3, 87, 102, and 109.



excerpts from his work can be found in Tzetzes' commentary on Lycophron's *Alexandra*.<sup>45</sup> Eustathios, archbishop of Thessalonike, also included parts of Dio in his works.<sup>46</sup>

The ancient Roman world was a source of inspiration for Michael Attaleiates, a high-ranking legal and military official, as well. Let us first consider his legal treatise. The *Ponema Nomikon* is a completely different text from Psellos' *Synopsis Legum* in terms of character and purpose, although it is a similar kind of legal compendium. It has a more practical character and therefore would have been particularly useful to jurists.<sup>47</sup> According to Attaleiates himself, his aim was to record the current laws of the state in a brief and easily understood treatise.<sup>48</sup> He begins his work by succinctly explaining the Republican system of government and points out that at first the majority of laws were not written down and were based on custom.<sup>49</sup> He then refers to the process which led to the promulgation of the *Law of the Twelve Tables*; a board of ten men was elected, with the legal expert Claudius Appius as the head. Having collected the Roman laws, and also having taken into consideration the legislation established in various Greek cities, they selected the laws for inclusion in the code. Attaleiates passes over in two sentences imperial regulations promulgated by emperors after the end of the Republic, reaching the Justinianic codification of laws and soon after the *Basilika*, the compilation of the Justinianic corpus of laws produced by Leo VI the Wise (r. 886–912).<sup>50</sup> What is important here is that Attaleiates saw fit to introduce his text by giving an account, albeit a short one, of the history of Roman jurisprudence. He thus presents the contemporary legislative system as the final stage in a continuum of legal developments beginning with the recording of laws during the Republic.

Attaleiates' *History* covers the reigns of the Byzantine emperors from Michael IV the Paphlagonian to Nikephoros Botaneiates, to whom the work is dedicated.<sup>51</sup> Two sections of the work are particularly revealing of the historian's perception of

<sup>45</sup> Lycophron, *Lycophronis Alexandra*, ed. by L. Mascialino (Leipzig, 1964). In his edition of Cassius Dio, Boissevain includes the corresponding sections of Tzetzes' works.

<sup>46</sup> Angold, *Church and Society*, 179–96. For both Tzetzes' and Eustathios' treatment of Cassius Dio, see the introduction in vol. 1 of Dio's *Roman History*, trans. into English by E. Cary (London, 1914–1927), xxiii.

<sup>47</sup> Numerous scholars have underlined the 'superiority' of *Ponema Nomikon* over *Synopsis Legum*. See, for example: S. Troiannos, *Οι Πηγές του Βυζαντινού Δικαίου* (Athens, 1999), 208; Kazhdan and Wharton-Epstein, *Change*, 146. It seems likely that Michael Doukas ordered a second juridical textbook because he was dissatisfied with *Synopsis Legum* presented to him by Psellos: Wolska-Conus, 'L'école', 97–8.

<sup>48</sup> Attaleiates, *Πρόηγμα νομικόν*, 415 (proem).

<sup>49</sup> For Attaleiates' account of the history of Roman law, see Attaleiates, *Πρόηγμα νομικόν*, 415–16.

<sup>50</sup> The presentation of the material relies on the structure of the *Basilika*, although Attaleiates occasionally arranges the information in a different order than that found in his source: Wolska-Conus, 'L'école', 99.

<sup>51</sup> For recent approaches to Attaleiates' work, see A. Kaldellis, 'Equivalence'; Krallis, *Politics*; Krallis, "'Democratic" Action'; D. Krallis, 'Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos', in *Reading Michael Psellos*, ed. by C. Barber and D. Jenkins (Leiden, 2006), 167–91; A. Markopoulos, 'The Portrayal of the Male Figure

Roman antiquity. First, in his account of Michael Doukas' reign, Attaleiates contrasts the leaders of the contemporary Romans with those of the ancient Romans.<sup>52</sup> He notes, among other things, that, although ancient Romans had not known Christianity, due to their inherent magnanimity they educated themselves to observe and practise virtues such as piety and purity. They identified a defeat or a negative omen as a sign of divine displeasure and sought to investigate whether something necessary had been neglected or a shameful act had been committed. Once they had appeased their gods, they campaigned against their enemies and achieved marvellous victories.<sup>53</sup> Contemporary Roman emperors and generals do not act in the same manner as their ancestors. They are more interested in their own personal gain than in the well-being of their countrymen and the glory of the Empire. For Attaleiates, the attitudes of ancient Roman leaders are the standard against which he measures his contemporaries; he uses Roman politicians of the past as exempla to strongly criticize modern Byzantine leaders. An interesting literary parallel to Attaleiates' attempt to attribute Christian virtues to ancient Romans can be found in Zonaras' chronicle; as was observed in the third chapter, Zonaras tailors Plutarch's portrayal of the Roman king Numa to make clear that, although Numa was a pagan, he essentially exhibited the qualities of a good Christian.<sup>54</sup>

The other section in which Attaleiates' Roman antiquarianism emerges is the extensive digression into Botaneiates' alleged ancestry. According to the historian, the emperor descended from the family of the Phokades, who are presented as being descendants of both Constantine the Great and two well-known and highly esteemed families of ancient Rome, the Fabii and the Scipiones.<sup>55</sup> Attaleiates makes special mention of three renowned figures of Republican Rome: the consul Aemilius Paulus; Scipio Africanus, a general in the Second Punic War; and his brother, the consul Scipio Asiaticus. He gives a brief account of the military accomplishments achieved by each of these figures. It is not possible to tell whether Attaleiates himself invented the noble ancestry of the Phokades or whether he used material which was in circulation around that time.<sup>56</sup> As he does earlier in his narrative, he links the chief protagonist of his work to ancient Romans so as to elevate Botaneiates in his readers' estimation. By emphasizing

in Michael Attaleiates, in *H αυτοκρατορία σε κρίση (;): το Βυζάντιο τον 11<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα (1025–1081)*, ed. by V. Blysidou (Athens, 2003), 215–30.

<sup>52</sup> The comparison between Attaleiates' contemporaries and their Roman ancestors can be found in Attaleiates, *Historia*, 149–52. For an extensive treatment of this subject, see Krallis, *Politics*, 192–9.

<sup>53</sup> Attaleiates, *Historia*, 150.

<sup>54</sup> See pp. 52–3 in this book.

<sup>55</sup> Attaleiates' description of Nikephoros Phokas' Roman ancestry is contained in Attaleiates, *Historia*, 167–71.

<sup>56</sup> Markopoulos, 'Antiquarianism', 289–90. According to Psellos, numerous writings about Nikephoros Phokas were circulating during that time: Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, 98.82–5. Cf. J. Ljubarskij, 'Nikephoros Phokas in Byzantine Historical Writings', *Byzantinoslavica*, 54 (1993), 245–53.

the unbroken continuity between these icons of the Roman Republic and the Phokades from whom Botaneiates supposedly descends, he projects, in a sense, the qualities of powerful and memorable figures of ancient Rome onto the emperor whom he wishes to exalt.<sup>57</sup>

Composed during the first half of the twelfth century, the historical work of the caesar Nikephoros Bryennios also recalls the ancient Roman past.<sup>58</sup> Discussing the events from 1070 to 1079, Bryennios features some of the most prominent historical figures of the period, making Alexios Komnenos and Nikephoros Bryennios the Elder the central heroes of the narrative. In her study dedicated to Bryennios' work, Leonora Neville characterizes both Attaleiates and Bryennios as 'Romanizing historians'.<sup>59</sup> Bryennios occasionally uses exempla taken from Roman history to make comparisons with key figures in his narrative. Isaakios Komnenos, for instance, was put in charge of the military expedition against the Turks in Cappadocia by the emperor Michael Doukas. Isaakios' younger brother, Alexios, marched along with him. Bryennios provides a double example for this. He says that Alexios exceeds Scipio Africanus the Younger in military virtue. He then adds that Scipio followed his father, the consul Aemilius Paulus, in his campaign against the Macedonian king Perseus, thus drawing a second parallel between Alexios and Scipio, both of whom joined an expedition under the command of a senior member of their family.<sup>60</sup> Although it is unusual for Bryennios to explicitly compare figures in his narrative with ancient Roman paradigms, his heroes are portrayed as having classical Roman virtues.<sup>61</sup> Neville views Bryennios' quest for heroes in Roman antiquity as the author's attempt to understand the processes of social and political transformation in Alexios Komnenos' time.<sup>62</sup>

In the twelfth century, when Byzantine rhetoric flourished,<sup>63</sup> both Greek and Roman exempla frequently made their appearance in imperial orations as well.<sup>64</sup> A prime example in which we find numerous exempla drawn from Roman history is Nikephoros Basilakes' extensive oration to the emperor John Komnenos. Basilakes, aiming to exalt the recipient of his speech, repeatedly compares John with great figures from the Roman past, drawing material from the early days of Rome, and from Republican and imperial Rome. He recalls Tarquin the Elder, the

<sup>57</sup> Attaleiates claims that Constantine the Great removed the most illustrious patricians and their families from Rome to the newly built city of Constantinople, and compares the Fabii and the Phokades with the roots and the branches of the same tree: Attaleiates, *Historia*, 167.20–168, 170.5–86.

<sup>58</sup> See Neville, *Heroes*; D. R. Reinsch, 'Ο Νικηφόρος Βρυέννιος – ένας Μακεδόνας συγγραφέας', in *Β' Διεθνές Συμπόσιο: Βυζαντινή Μακεδονία, Δίκαιο, Θεολογία, Φιλολογία* (Thessalonike, 2003), 169–77.

<sup>59</sup> Neville, *Heroes*, 35. <sup>60</sup> Bryennios, *History*, 147.7–15 (Book 2.3).

<sup>61</sup> Neville, *Heroes*, 89–111. See also K. Paidas, 'Issues of Social Gender in Nikephoros Bryennios' *Υλη Ιστοριών*, BZ, 101 (2008), 737–49.

<sup>62</sup> Neville, *Heroes*, 197.

<sup>63</sup> P. Roilos, *Amphoteroglossia: A Poetics of the Twelfth-Century Medieval Greek Novel* (Washington, 2005), 26–32.

<sup>64</sup> Cresci, 'Exempla', 119–30.

fifth king of Rome, and his successor Servius Tullius, both of whom launched an extensive building programme in the city, remarking that John fortified New Rome with arms, instead of walls.<sup>65</sup> Many exempla relate to Republican Rome. The emperor fights against foreign enemies with greater bravery than Scipio,<sup>66</sup> is more adventurous than Marcellus, and a better general than Sertorius.<sup>67</sup> Unlike Aemilius Paulus, who defeated the Macedonian king Perseus, John does not parade his triumphs.<sup>68</sup> Basilakes uses an imperial model to praise his addressee's skill as an archer; he says that John is more competent at using a bow than the emperor Gratian.<sup>69</sup>

This overview of the eleventh- and twelfth-century literature in which an interest in the ancient Roman world is identified demonstrates that authors drew on Roman history and treated their material in various ways. The purposes of the work impacted on the selection and presentation of the material. In the historical works of Attaleiates and Bryennios, the presentation of the Roman past serves as the moral compass of the narrative. The extent to which their heroes exhibit qualities which characterized ancient Romans determines how favourably they are portrayed. Psellos' *Historia Syntomos* was primarily a vehicle to offer the young emperor Michael Doukas imperial models for imitation. The author's account of the Roman Republic, a polity which was not conducive to the aims of the text, was thus brief. Authors would use well-known figures from Roman antiquity as exempla for juxtaposition with the heroes of their works. To provide the most characteristic examples, an emperor was likely to be compared with Marcus Aurelius for his aptitude for knowledge and with Trajan and Hadrian for his military achievements. Of course, such exempla are rhetorical devices which allowed a learned writer to display his rhetorical training, but at the same time they are understood as representing knowledge shared by authors and their audiences. These icons of Old Rome were part of the collective memory of the Byzantines, who associated them with particular features. These remarks raise the question of how widespread Roman antiquarianism was among the learned men of the period. The material at our disposal does not allow us to propose a definite answer. Many of those works were produced at the imperial court. The individual interests and tastes of an emperor must have played an important role, as the numerous works concerned with Roman antiquities at the court of Michael Doukas indicate. The personal preferences of an individual writer should also be taken into consideration. It was Attaleiates' own choice, for instance, to either invent or incorporate the story that Botaneiates was related to highly esteemed Roman families into his narrative.

<sup>65</sup> Basilakes, *Λόγος*, 70.30–4.      <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.2–3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.5 and 56.31 respectively.      <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.23–4.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.11. The Roman emperor Gratian was said to be a skilled huntsman. See, for instance, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, ed. by W. Seyfarth, II (Stuttgart, 1999), 185.14–22.

In parallel to this nostalgia for Roman antiquities, a pronounced interest in ancient Greek literature can also be observed during the twelfth century. For instance, Anna Komnene was inspired by Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* and John Kinnamos by Thucydides and Xenophon.<sup>70</sup> Authors such as Tzetzes and Basilakes included both Greek and Roman material in their works.<sup>71</sup> One can assume that some authors were more interested than others in either Greek or Roman history and keener to take material from either of these traditions.

Zonaras seems to have been receptive to the literary trends of his time. The considerable attention he pays to Old Rome certainly fits within the broader framework of Roman antiquarianism noted in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. His use of Cassius Dio's history is not surprising either, as the work of the Roman historian appears to have been in vogue at that time.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps inspired by texts which displayed an interest in the Roman past, such as those of Dio, Xiphilinos, and Psellos, Zonaras might have been encouraged to research the Roman origins of Byzantium. He can be seen as one of the 'Romanizing' authors, to whom Roman antiquities appealed much more than the ancient Greek past. His quest for the ancient Roman past is also shown in his commentary on canonical works,<sup>73</sup> which further reinforces the idea that Zonaras was fascinated by the Roman tradition.

## 5.2 Zonaras' Interest in the Roman Past Within the Historical Context of the Later Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

In addition to the literary context of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the social and cultural milieu in which Zonaras lived and composed his work probably had a strong impact on the selection of his material. The author's decision to draw on the Roman tradition and emphasize the Roman antecedents of the Empire may be better understood when one considers the growing stream of Westerners coming to Constantinople, noted particularly from the mid-eleventh century onwards. This development was a result of both the commercial treaties concluded between Byzantium and the Italian maritime cities and the First Crusade.

Following a chrysobull issued by Alexios Komnenos in the late eleventh century,<sup>74</sup> Venetian merchants were highly motivated to do business in

<sup>70</sup> Scott, 'Classical Tradition', 71–2; John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, 7.

<sup>71</sup> For Tzetzes' treatment of Greek authors, see N. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1996), 190–6. For Basilakes, see Cresci, 'Exempla'.

<sup>72</sup> It is worth noting that although Dio was read by intellectuals for much of the Byzantine period, he was not a source used by early chroniclers such as John Malalas and the author of the *Chronicon Paschale*: Scott, 'Classical Tradition', 72–3.

<sup>73</sup> Macrides, 'Perception of the Past'.

<sup>74</sup> Scholars have yet to reach a definite conclusion as to the date when the chrysobull was issued. It is traditionally dated to 1082: T. Madden, 'The Chrysobull of Alexius I Comnenus to the Venetians: the

Byzantium. Although the original document has not come down to us, a detailed record of the concessions to the Venetians can be found in two Latin translations of Alexios' chrysobull incorporated into later chrysobulls issued by Manuel Komnenos in 1148 and Isaac II Angelos (r. 1185–1195) in 1187.<sup>75</sup> The Republic of Venice was offered generous trading privileges by Alexios, two of which were of great importance.<sup>76</sup> First, a separate commercial quarter on the south bank of the Golden Horn was granted to Venetian traders. Three landing stages, a number of buildings, and the church of St Akindynos, with its adjacent bakery, were situated in this area and now passed into Venetian hands. Second, Venetian merchants were exempted altogether from taxes on products either imported to or exported from the capital. Similar privileges were awarded to Venetian traders in other ports of the Empire as well. The commercial advantages given to Venice were confirmed by chrysobulls issued by Alexios' heirs, John Komnenos (in 1126) and Manuel Komnenos (in 1147).<sup>77</sup> These concessions aimed at, and succeeded in, making Byzantine cities, and particularly the capital, into markets attractive to Venetians. Indeed, the regular trade contacts with Venice and the growing number of Venetian merchants in Constantinople led Manuel to issue a second chrysobull in 1148 and to provide them with new buildings and a fourth landing stage in their quarter in the imperial capital.<sup>78</sup> Venice was not the only one of the Italian maritime republics to which a series of privileges was granted by the Komnenian emperors. The year 1111, for example, saw Alexios according privileges to Pisa.<sup>79</sup> Pisans merchants were similarly offered a quarter and a landing stage in Constantinople, privileges ratified by John in 1135.

In addition to the streams of Italian merchants flooding Constantinople, Western mercenaries, too, joined the Byzantine army from the mid-eleventh century onwards. Hervé Frankopoulos, Robert Crépin, and Roussel de Bailleul are prominent examples of Franks who were appointed as commanders of the Byzantine army.<sup>80</sup> In the autumn of 1087, Alexios Komnenos reached an agreement with Robert, count of Flanders, by which 500 knights were to be sent to the Byzantine emperor to assist him in his campaign against the Turks in

Date and the Debate', *Journal of Medieval History*, 28 (2002), 23–41, in which previous scholarship is summarized. Peter Frankopan, however, has argued for a date in 1092: Frankopan, 'Chrysobull'.

<sup>75</sup> *I trattati con Bisanzio, 992–1198*, ed. by M. Pozza and G. Ravegnani (Venice, 1993), 68–87.

<sup>76</sup> For an extensive treatment of the privileges granted to Venice by Alexios, see Penna, *Imperial Acts*, 26–34; Nicol, *Venice*, 60–1; Lilie, *Handel*, 8–16, 50–68.

<sup>77</sup> Penna, *Imperial Acts*, 35–40; Nicol, *Venice*, 77–85; Lilie, *Handel*, 17–23.

<sup>78</sup> Penna, *Imperial Acts*, 40–4; Nicol, *Venice*, 86; Lilie, *Handel*, 23–4.

<sup>79</sup> For the privileges granted to Pisa by Alexios, see Penna, *Imperial Acts*, 101–14; Nicol, *Venice*, 75–6; Lilie, *Handel*, 68–76.

<sup>80</sup> A. Kazhdan, 'Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century,' in *The Crusades*, ed. by Laiou and Mottahedeh, 83–100; R. Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, trans. into English by J. Morris and J. Ridings (Oxford, 1993) [original in German, *Byzanz und die Kreuzfahrerstaaten* (Munich, 1981)].

Anatolia.<sup>81</sup> Pressured by Turkish expansion in Asia Minor, Alexios is likely to have requested that additional military forces be sent to him in the early 1090s.<sup>82</sup> Frankish contingents made their presence strongly felt in the imperial capital, particularly after the First Crusade in 1097, a turning point in relations between Byzantium and the Latin kingdoms.<sup>83</sup> The years after 1097 saw a large number of Western soldiers coming to Constantinople. A further implication of the First Crusade was the arrival of numerous pilgrims from the West, who travelled to the newly founded crusader states via the Byzantine capital. We also know of a small number of Frankish interpreters who were active at the court of the first two Komnenian emperors.<sup>84</sup>

Taken together, these considerations suggest that Westerners were an important part of Constantinopolitan society in the period when Zonaras lived and wrote his works. The flow of Frankish soldiers, merchants, and pilgrims to the city would have meant that Latin would be increasingly heard around the capital. In his poem *Theogonia*, composed during the 1140s, John Tzetzes comments on the number of languages heard in the Constantinople of his time, Latin included.<sup>85</sup> Interestingly enough, he seems to put slightly more emphasis on Latin than languages such as Persian and Arabic.<sup>86</sup> For contemporary Byzantines, in other words, Latin was no longer simply the language of their ancestors. It was part of their present, spoken by foreigners from the West.<sup>87</sup> Before his withdrawal from public life, Zonaras would have witnessed the presence of Westerners in Constantinople; even after his tonsuring as a monk, he would have been aware that Frankish communities were becoming firmly established in the city.<sup>88</sup> As will

<sup>81</sup> See Angold, *History*, 157–8.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. Also, for the letter of Alexios Komnenos to Robert of Flanders, which is translated into Latin, see *Epistula Alexii I Komneni ad Robertum comitem Flandrum*, ed. by H. Hagenmeyer, in *Epistulae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes: die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088–1100* (Innsbruck, 1901), 130–6. According to Peter Frankopan, the letter, in the form in which it has come down to us today, is an extended version of the original document and was probably produced by a Westerner: Frankopan, *First Crusade*, 60–2.

<sup>83</sup> Modern scholars have been inclined to believe that the Franks of the First Crusade were essentially invited by Alexios himself to help him repel the Turkish threat and recover Asia Minor. See, for example, Frankopan, *First Crusade*, 71–100, which includes a thorough examination of the circumstances that led the emperor to ask for help from the West; J. Shepard, 'Cross-Purposes: Alexios Komnenus and the First Crusade', in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. by J. Phillips (Manchester, 1997), 107–29.

<sup>84</sup> A. Rodriguez Suarez, 'From Greek into Latin: Western Scholars and Translators in Constantinople During the Reign of John II', in *John II Komnenos*, ed. by Bucossi and Rodriguez Suarez, 91–109.

<sup>85</sup> The epilogue to Tzetzes' *Theogony*, in which the extract discussed here is found, is edited by P. Agapitos in 'John Tzetzes and the Blemish Examiners: A Byzantine Teacher on Schedography, Everyday Language and Writerly Disposition', *Medioevo Greco*, 17 (2017), 1–57, esp. 41–2 (verses 766–800) for the passage under discussion.

<sup>86</sup> Tzetzes dedicates nine verses to the Latin language, while other languages are described in between three and six verses each.

<sup>87</sup> For some aspects of this, see Ciggaar, *Travellers*, 98–9.

<sup>88</sup> The construction of more than one church using the Latin rite by the middle of the century is an indication that there was a well-established and organized Western presence in the capital at that time: R. Lilie, 'Die lateinische Kirche in der Romania vor dem Vierten Kreuzzug', *BZ*, 82 (1989), 202–20. In



be shown in the next chapter, he was in touch with a circle of acquaintances outside his monastery. Due to the close proximity of the island of St Glykeria to the capital, it is likely that he occasionally visited Constantinople himself or welcomed visitors from there to his monastery.<sup>89</sup>

In the *Epitome*, Zonaras makes his view about the connection of the West to the world of Old Rome, the Byzantines' own heritage, very clear. Latins were in no way related to the Roman Empire. He intrudes into his own narrative twice to remark that Franks are of German extraction, drawing at this point on Prokopios.<sup>90</sup> Like all Byzantines, Zonaras does not consider the Frankish leader to be a Roman emperor and calls him 'the king of Frankia' or 'the king of the Franks' instead.<sup>91</sup>

The chronicler's emphasis on the Roman roots of the Empire could have been a result of the increased cultural and social interactions with Westerners, whose language was a reminder of the Byzantines' own Roman ancestry. The author is likely to have been stimulated by the atmosphere in the capital to investigate and write extensively about the Roman past. Notably, previous scholarship has shown that the negative attitude of the twelfth-century Byzantine elite towards Westerners was among the reasons that led learned men of the time to take an interest in aspects of classical Greek culture.<sup>92</sup> Contemporaries of Zonaras responded to the contacts with Latins by showing a preference for classical Greece. It could be maintained that Zonaras was among those who opted to take the opposite 'cultural path' and, prompted by the influx of Franks, turned his attention to the Roman origins of Byzantium.

Zonaras was not the only twelfth-century author who, prompted by the Frankish presence in Constantinople, stressed the Roman antecedents of the Empire. A similar attitude can be seen in the court poems produced by Zonaras' near-contemporaries Theodore Prodromos and Manganeios Prodromos.<sup>93</sup> For example, both poets are inclined to repeatedly refer to Constantinople as

the absence of reliable sources, it is not easy for us to estimate the actual number of Franks residing permanently in Constantinople during this time. It is generally agreed, for instance, that the Venetian population transmitted by contemporary Venetian sources for the year 1171—larger than 10,000—seems implausible: Nicol, *Venice*, 88; P. Schreiner, 'Untersuchungen zu den Niederlassungen westlicher Kaufleute im Byzantinischen Reich des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts', *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 7 (1979), 175–91, at 182. Nevertheless, such figures may reflect the increasing influx of Latins to Constantinople over the course of the twelfth century.

<sup>89</sup> For these subjects, see pp. 87–94 of this book.

<sup>90</sup> *Epitome*, II, 261.10–3, 299.10–1.

<sup>91</sup> For example, see *Ibid.*, 286.7, 299.5, 300.15, 442.1. The noun used by Zonaras for 'king' is 'ῥῆξ'.

<sup>92</sup> Angold, *Church and Society*, 512. According to Kaldellis, the twelfth-century attachment to Greek past is a reaction to a broader cultural diversity which characterized contemporary Byzantine society: Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, 293.

<sup>93</sup> For Theodore Prodromos, see R. Beaton, 'The Rhetoric of Poverty: The Lives and Opinions of Theodore Prodromos', *BMGS*, 11 (1987), 1–28; A. Kazhdan, 'Theodore Prodromos: A Reappraisal', in Kazhdan and Franklin, *Studies*, 87–114. For Manganeios Prodromos, see pp. 70–1 (footnote 32).



'New Rome' and juxtapose the city with 'Elder Rome',<sup>94</sup> which was thought to pale in comparison with the Byzantine capital.<sup>95</sup> The primacy of Constantinople over Rome is highlighted particularly in *epithalamia* written about the marriage of a Westerner to a member of the imperial family.<sup>96</sup> This is the case with the poem composed by Theodore Prodromos in 1142 for the arrival in the imperial capital of Bertha of Sulzbach, the sister-in-law of Conrad III and Manuel Komnenos' new bride.<sup>97</sup> The same applies to Manganeios' poem for the wedding of Theodora, third daughter of the *sebastokratorissa* Irene, to Conrad's brother Heinrich in 1148.<sup>98</sup> Both Theodore and Manganeios stress that the German royal court will acquire greater prestige through its connections to the Byzantine imperial house than vice versa. Because of this alliance, even 'Western Rome', according to Manganeios, 'will show itself brighter' ('*Ρώμη δυτική δειχθῆ φωτεινότερά*').<sup>99</sup> Such messages were intended to be heard and understood by Westerners attending these ceremonies,<sup>100</sup> which were perfect occasions for the Byzantines to advertise their Roman heritage and concomitantly emphasize the superiority of New Rome over Old Rome. Like the poems of Theodore Prodromos and Manganeios, the *Epitome*, too, seems to have been a product of this climate, which stimulated intellectuals to promote Byzantine *Romanitas*.

### 5.3 Zonaras' Approach to the Roman Past

Zonaras' references to Rome as 'Elder Rome', a characterization which implies the existence of a 'New Rome', and the references to Constantinople itself as

<sup>94</sup> See, for instance, Theodore Prodromos, *Εἰς τὴν ἐπὶ τῆ ἀλώσει τῆς Κασταμόνος...* (poem 4), in Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, verses 11 and 77; Theodore Prodromos, *Ἔκφρασις διὰ στίχων ἡρωικῶν τῆς ἐπὶ τῆ ἀλώσει τῆς Κασταμόνος προελεύσεως...* (poem 6), in Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, verse 18; Theodore Prodromos, *Τῷ μεγαλονίκῳ πορφυρογεννήτῳ καὶ βασιλεῖ κυρῷ Ἰωάννῃ τῷ Κομνηνῷ...* (poem 12), in Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, verse 7. For Manganeios, see Manganeios Prodromos, *Ἄλλος λόγος εὐχαριστήριος εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν αὐτοκράτορα...*, in *De Manganis*, verse 43; Manganeios Prodromos, *Τοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν αὐτοκράτορα ἐπὶ τῆ δωρεῇ τοῦ ἐν τοῖς Μαγγάνοις ἀδελφάτου*, in *De Manganis*, verse 140.

<sup>95</sup> This is nicely condensed, for example, in the following verses by Theodore Prodromos:

Second Rome queen, New Rome, most honoured, / Rome superior in power to Elder Rome, / even if you follow and come second in time... (*Ρώμη δευτέρα βασιλῆς, Ρώμη κудиστή νέα, / Ρώμη προτέρα κατ' ἰσχὺν τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ρώμης / κὰν ἕστερίζης χρονικῶς αὐτὴν καὶ δευτερεύης...*) See Theodore Prodromos, *Τῷ βασιλεῖ μετὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐξέλευσιν ἐν τῷ Λωπαδίῳ διάγοντι* (poem 18), in Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, verses 97–9.

<sup>96</sup> For these points, see Jeffreys, 'Comnenian Background'.

<sup>97</sup> See Theodore Prodromos, *Εἰσιτήριοι ἐπὶ τῆ νυμφευθείσῃ ἐξ Ἀλαμανῶν τῷ πορφυρογεννήτῳ κύρ Μανουῆλ καὶ σεβαστοκράτορι*, in Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, 320–1.

<sup>98</sup> The *Epithalamion* written by Manganeios has been edited by Carl Neumann in *Griechische Geschichtsschreiber*, 65–8. Neumann mistakenly attributes the poem to Theodore Prodromos. See also E. and M. Jeffreys, 'Literary Reactions', 114–15.

<sup>99</sup> See Manganeios Prodromos, *Epithalamion*, 67.61.

<sup>100</sup> Ciggaar, *Travellers*, 23; Jeffreys, 'Comnenian Background', 472.

'New Rome' can be taken to reflect his aim to stress Byzantine continuity with the ancient Roman Empire.<sup>101</sup> His attempt to promote the image of Constantinople as 'New Rome' becomes clearer still when we consider the way in which he changes relevant extracts from his sources. The alterations he makes to the chronicle of Theophanes, for instance, are interesting in this regard. As indicative examples, we can compare the following excerpts from the two texts. For reasons of convenience, the extracts are listed one after another.

(1) Theophanes:

For when Eusebios died, the people restored Paul to the throne of Constantinople, whereas the Arians appointed Makedonios instead, so that a civil war broke out then.

*τοῦ γὰρ Εὐσεβίου θανόντος, ὁ λαὸς τὸν Παῦλον τῶ θρόνῳ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἀπεκατέστησεν, οἱ δὲ Ἀρειανοὶ τὸν Μακεδόنيον ἀντεχειροτόνησαν, ὡς ἐντεῦθεν ἐμφύλιον γενέσθαι πόλεμον.*<sup>102</sup>

Zonaras:

When Eusebios died, Makedonios, who fought against the Holy Spirit, was put on the throne of New Rome by the Arians.

*τοῦ δ' Εὐσεβίου θανόντος ὁ πνευματομάχος παρὰ τῶν Ἀρειανῶν εἰς τὸν τῆς νέας Ῥώμης θρόνον ἀνάγεται Μακεδόنيος [...]*<sup>103</sup>

(2) Theophanes:

When Eudoxios died in that year, the Arians proposed Demophilos as a bishop [...]

*Τούτῳ δὲ τῶ χρόνῳ Εὐδοξίου τελευτήσαντος Δημόφιλον Ἀρειανοὶ προεβάλλοντο ἐπίσκοπον [...]*<sup>104</sup>

Zonaras:

In that time, when Eudoxios, the patriarch of New Rome who had held unorthodox beliefs, died, Demophilos, who happened to be of the same beliefs as his predecessor, was elevated in his place.

*Ἐπὶ τούτου τελευτήσαντος Εὐδοξίου τοῦ κακοδόξου τῆς νέας Ῥώμης ἀρχιερέως ἀντεισῆχθη Δημόφιλος ὁμόδοξος τυγχάνων τῶ πρό αὐτοῦ.*<sup>105</sup>

(3) Theophanes:

When things were in this way, the Augustus Gratian, having known, marched to Panonia supposedly for help, proclaimed Theodosios Augustus,

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, *Epitome*, III, 19.5, 56.17, 119.9, 124.5, 221.4, 298.15.

<sup>102</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 42.22–5. <sup>103</sup> *Epitome*, III, 58.1–3.

<sup>104</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 58.18–19. <sup>105</sup> *Epitome*, III, 74.8–10.

instead of Valens, named him emperor and sent him to war against the Goths.

τούτων δὲ οὕτω διατεθέντων, γνοὺς Γρατιανὸς ὁ Αὔγουστος, ἐν τῇ Πανοῖα κατερχόμενος ὡς πρὸς βοήθειαν ἀντὶ Οὐάλεντος ἐνέδυσσε Θεοδοσίον Αὔγουστον καὶ ἀνηγόρευσε βασιλέα καὶ ἀπέστειλεν εἰς τὸν κατὰ τῶν Γόθων πόλεμον.<sup>106</sup>

Zonaras:

And Gratian, being aware that he would not be able to manage such power by himself, proclaimed Theodosios emperor of New Rome [...]

καὶ συνιδὼν ὡς οὐχ οἴος τ' ἂν εἴη αὐτὸς μόνος τὴν τοσαύτην ἰθύνειν ἀρχήν, βασιλέα τῆς νέας Ῥώμης ἀναγορεύει τὸν Θεοδοσίον [...]<sup>107</sup>

As is apparent from these cases, Zonaras would sometimes replace the name of Constantinople, found in Theophanes' text, with 'New Rome' (example 1). He would also insert the characterization 'New Rome' into his account, even if the name of the capital did not appear in the corresponding segment of Theophanes (examples 2 and 3).<sup>108</sup> A particularly interesting point is that these amendments are made in connection with the Byzantine imperial throne or the patriarchal throne of Constantinople. 'New Rome' was part of the official, full title of the patriarch of Constantinople: 'Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Oecumenical Patriarch' ('ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Νέας Ῥώμης καὶ οἰκουμενικὸς πατριάρχης').<sup>109</sup> In the first example, Theophanes uses an abbreviated form of the title, saying simply 'the throne of Constantinople'. Zonaras, too, does not write the full title to refer to the throne of Constantinople in either of the first two examples; it is characteristic, however, that in both cases he prefers using the second part of the official title, rather than the first: 'the throne of New Rome'. By making these amendments to the narrative of Theophanes—by replacing 'Constantinople' with 'New Rome' and by inserting 'New Rome' into his text—Zonaras is clearly trying to highlight the historical ties of the imperial office and the patriarchal see of Constantinople with the capital of the ancient Roman

<sup>106</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 65.28–66.2.

<sup>107</sup> *Epitome*, III, 84.9–11.

<sup>108</sup> See also Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 75.19–26 and *Epitome*, III, 95.1–3 for another comparative example.

<sup>109</sup> The full title of the patriarch of Constantinople is often inscribed on the seals of particular patriarchs: see, for example, J. Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, Volume 6: Emperors, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Addenda* (Washington, 2009), no. 116.1 (the seal of Sergios II) and no. 118.2 (the seal of John VIII Xiphilinos). Also, the full form of the title appears in the Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, a collection of documents dated from 1315 to 1402 which were preserved in the chancery of the Patriarchate of Constantinople: see, for instance, the titles of the patriarchs in *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel, Edition und Übersetzung der Urkunden aus den Jahren 1315–1331, vol. 1*, ed. by H. Hunger and O. Kresten (Vienna, 1981), document no. 80 (the patriarch Isaiah), document no. 109 and document no. 148 (the patriarch John XII Glykys).

Empire, perhaps in the face of the Western rulers who claimed for themselves the title of the Roman Emperor and the papal claims to primacy over the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Noteworthy, too, is the keen interest Zonaras maintains particularly in the Roman Republic and its institutions. This is manifest in the proem of the *Epitome*, where he declares that he will report 'what consulship was a long time ago, what dictatorship was, what the work of the censors was and what the term of office for each of these posts was' ('τίς μὲν ἡ ὑπατεία τὸ παλαιὸν ἦν, τίς δὲ ἡ δικτατωρία, τί δ' ἦν τὸ ἔργον τῶν τιμητῶν, καὶ πόσος ὄριστο χρόνος ἐκάστη τῶν ἀρχῶν τουτωνῶ').<sup>110</sup> Indeed, when his narrative reaches the period of the establishment of the Roman Republic, the author provides a thorough analysis of the republican institutions, describing the role of dictators, consuls, and censors.<sup>111</sup> In all probability, the material about the institutions of the Roman Republic derives from Cassius Dio, although the corresponding sections of Dio's work have not come down to us.

An important question to ask is why the chronicler dedicated a large part of his work to the Roman Republic. As has already been noted, although Republican Rome was an integral part of Roman history, most Byzantine chroniclers would discuss this period only very briefly. A notable exception seems to have been John of Antioch. So far as we can tell from the material collected by Constantine Porphyrogenetos in his *Excerpta de insidiis* and *Excerpta de virtutibus*, John's chronicle discussed Republican Rome extensively. Psellos, too, did not skip the entire Republican period in his *Historia Syntomos*. Zonaras, nevertheless, clearly marks a break from the Byzantine chronographic tradition, because he gives a more thorough and more detailed account of the Roman Republic than any other chronicler we know.<sup>112</sup>

Reaching the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC and the battle of Corinth in the same year, Zonaras regrets that he cannot continue with his account of the Late Roman Republic because he cannot find sources for this period. As was noted in Chapter 2, he did not have at his disposal the relevant books of Dio's history.<sup>113</sup> The chronicler says: 'Let no one accuse me that I omitted these things on account of contempt or laziness or indolence and that I left my composition somewhat incomplete. For it was not due to indolence that I overlooked the things that are missing. Nor did I willingly leave my work half-complete [...]' ('μή μέ τις αἰτιῶτο ὡς ἢ καταφρονήσει ἢ ῥαθυμία ἢ ὄκνω ταῦτα παρελθόντα καὶ ἀτελές οἶον εἰκότα τὸ σύγγραμμα. οὐ γὰρ ῥαστώνη μοι τὰ λείποντα παρεώραται, οὐδ' ἤμιτελές ἐκὼν τὸ πόνημα καταλέλοιπα [...]').<sup>114</sup> The statements 'ἀτελές σύγγραμμά' and 'ἤμιτελές πόνημα' indicate the manner in which the author

<sup>110</sup> *Epitome*, I, 13.1–3.

<sup>111</sup> *Epitome*, II, 50–1, 69–72.

<sup>112</sup> Zonaras' extensive treatment of Republican Rome, his 'unique contribution to Byzantine chronicle-writing', has been underlined particularly by Macrides: Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom', 126–31.

<sup>113</sup> See p. 28 of this book.

<sup>114</sup> *Epitome*, II, 297.14–17.

viewed his work without a full account of the Roman Republic; for Zonaras, the *Epitome* clearly lacked an essential part of Roman history. Why is this?

Aside from the broader aim of the work, namely to give a compact account of important historical events,<sup>115</sup> the *Epitome* also had a much more specific purpose, one for which an analysis of Republican Rome was required: Zonaras aimed to demonstrate the development of the Roman political constitutions over time. The author, as a *megas droungarios* and a *protasekretis*, might have been prompted to investigate the forms of Roman government partly by his interest in jurisprudence.<sup>116</sup> Zonaras himself explicitly states this goal of his work in his proem, where he analyses in detail how Roman constitutions evolved.

Since I recalled the history of the Romans and the history of Rome, I thought it was necessary to write about those and record where the Roman nation comes from, where it originates from and by whom the region of Italy was inhabited a long time ago. And whence Romulus, he who became the founder of Rome, was brought to light, and how Romus, his brother, was killed and later how Romulus, too, was gone. And how at first this city was ruled by a king and what kind of customs and laws Romans used. And how Tarquinius Superbus changed kingship to tyranny and was ousted from power, and how many and what kind of wars Rome suffered because of his deposition. And how the Roman state was transformed into an aristocracy and then into a republic, with consuls, dictators and tribunes being in charge of public affairs [...] and how later the Roman state became a monarchy. And that Gaius Julius Caesar was the first monarch, although not overtly [...]

*Ῥωμαίων δὲ καὶ τῆς Ῥώμης μνησθείσης τῆς ἱστορίας, ἀναγκαῖόν μοι ἐνομήσθη καὶ περὶ τούτων συγγράμασθαι, καὶ παραδοῦναι πόθεν τὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἔθνος κακ τίνος ἔσχηκε τὴν ἀρχήν, καὶ παρὰ τίνων ἢ τῆς Ἰταλίας χώρα πρώην κατώκιστο ὅθεν τε προήχθη Ῥωμύλος εἰς φῶς ὁ τῆς Ῥώμης γενόμενος οἰκιστής, καὶ ὅπως ἀνηρέθη Ῥώμος ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, εἶτα κακείνους ἐγένετο ἀφανής· καὶ ὅπως πρῶτον ἢ πόλις αὕτη ἐβασιλεύθη, καὶ ἔθεσιν οἷσι καὶ νομίμοις ἐχρήσατο· καὶ ὡς εἰς τυραννίδα τὴν βασιλείαν ὁ Σούπερβος Ταρκύνιος μεταγαγὼν καθηρέθη, καὶ ὄσους πολέμους καὶ οἴους ἢ Ῥώμη διὰ τὴν ἐκείνου καθαίρεσιν ἤνεγκε· καὶ ὡς εἰς ἀριστοκρατίαν, εἶτα καὶ δημοκρατίαν μετηνέχθη Ῥωμαίοις τὰ πράγματα, ὑπάτων καὶ δικτατόρων, εἶτα καὶ δημάρχων τὴν τῶν κοινῶν ποιουμένων διοίκησιν. [...] καὶ ὅπως ὕστερον ἐκ τούτων εἰς μοναρχίαν ἢ ἀρχὴ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις μετέπεσε· καὶ ὡς πρῶτος ταύτης, εἰ καὶ μὴ καθαρῶς, ὁ Γάιος Ἰούλιος Καῖσαρ μετεποιήσατο [...]*<sup>117</sup>

<sup>115</sup> For a discussion of the broader purpose of the text, see p. 40 of this book.

<sup>116</sup> See also Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom', 131.

<sup>117</sup> *Epitome*, I, 12.10–13.1, 12.6–8.

According to Zonaras, it was necessary to write about the evolution of the Roman political system in his work. Therefore, he devotes a considerable part of his proem—around two pages of printed text—to a timeline of constitutional changes since the foundation of Rome. He also mentions the political figures that mark the changes from one form of government to the next (Romulus, Tarquinius Superbus, and Julius Caesar). The emphasis he places on the constitutional history of the Roman Empire at the very beginning of his text indicates that it plays a central thematic role in his project.

The writer reiterates the aim of his work elsewhere. For example, when he concludes his account of Jewish history and is about to introduce Roman antiquities into his work, he says:

Since I mentioned the history of Romans and recorded the history for them in terms of [their] invincible state, I thought it was necessary to tell and teach or remind those who read this work who the Romans are [...] and also how the Roman state, initially a kingship, was transformed into an aristocracy, namely a series of dictatorships and consulships, and hereafter turned into a republic and later became a monarchy again.

*Ῥωμαίων δὲ μνησθείσης τῆς ἱστορίας καὶ τούτοις κράτος ἀναθεμένης ἀήττητον, ἀναγκαῖον πάντως εἰπεῖν καὶ διδάξαι ἢ ἀναμνήσαι τοὺς ἐντευξομένους τούτῳ δὴ τῷ συγγράμματι, τίνες τε οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι [...] καὶ ὅπως (τὸ κράτος) βασιλευθὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς ἀριστοκρατίαν ἦτοι δικτατωρίας καὶ ὑπατείας μετέπεσε, καὶ εἰς δημοκρατίαν αὖθις μετήνεκτο, εἴτα εἰς μοναρχίαν ἐπανελήλυθεν.<sup>118</sup>*

Opening the Roman section of the *Epitome*, the chronicler wishes to remind his audience about a prominent theme introduced in his proem, the development of the Roman polity. The statement ‘*διδάξαι ἢ ἀναμνήσαι τοὺς ἐντευξομένους*’ illustrates that the author considers the transformation of Roman government to be a theme of a didactic character; he believes that knowledge of Rome’s constitutional history is beneficial to his audience. Later on, the scarcity of sources forces Zonaras to pass over the late Republican period, thus creating a gap in his presentation of Roman political history. For this reason, he sees fit to stress once more that he is interested in showing to his readers how the political system of Rome was transformed from a kingship into a republic, and then into a monarchy.<sup>119</sup> An account of Rome’s constitutional changes is also found in Zonaras’ extensive treatment of the apocalyptic material in the biblical Book of Daniel.<sup>120</sup> Commenting on the seventh chapter of Daniel, the chronicler uses the term ‘*πολυειδῆς*’ (‘of many kinds’) to refer to the Roman state, explaining in this

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 562.1–4, 562.8–11.

<sup>119</sup> *Epitome*, II, 297.9–14.

<sup>120</sup> *Epitome*, I, 212.14–214.2, 227.3–9.

way that the Empire has seen various forms of government since its foundation.<sup>121</sup> Zonaras briefly summarizes the evolution of the political system in Rome at the beginning of his account of the First Triumvirate as well.<sup>122</sup>

These observations allow for a better appreciation of why Zonaras, unlike the majority of earlier chroniclers, wished to provide a detailed account of Republican Rome. The Republic was an essential part of the core project of his work: to make the gradual evolution of the Roman political constitutions clear to his audience. Although the Republican system of government did not conform to the Byzantine political state of affairs, a monarchy centred on the key figure of the emperor, Zonaras regarded the Roman Republic as an important part of the development of the political system of his own time. For him, a republic, as a form of government, did not seem as incomprehensible as it might have done to other Byzantine chroniclers.<sup>123</sup>

It should be remembered that when Zonaras was writing, a form of democratic government had been established for some time in the Italian maritime cities. We may assume that increased contacts with Westerners would have brought an awareness of this among the twelfth-century literati of Constantinople. References, albeit sparse, to the democratic polities can be found in some twelfth-century authors.<sup>124</sup> Eustathios of Thessalonike, for instance, claimed that Venice was the only state of his time that preserved a democratic form of government.<sup>125</sup>

Zonaras' political reflections in his analysis of Daniel strongly suggest that he had a precise overall picture of the practical reality of Roman politics. His exegesis of the second chapter of Daniel (Daniel 2) demonstrates how aware he was of the defects of certain forms of government.<sup>126</sup> Daniel 2 narrates Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a colossal figure whose head was made of gold, shoulders and arms of silver, waist of brass, and legs of iron and clay. The sequence of materials represented the historical succession of four empires. In the Christian exegetical tradition, the four empires were commonly identified as the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek under Alexander the Great, and the Roman. The fourth empire, the Roman, was identified as the strongest of all, even though its foundation—represented by legs of iron and clay—was weak. This interpretation of Daniel's prophecies

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.3.      <sup>122</sup> *Epitome*, II, 298.8–13.

<sup>123</sup> Scott, 'Classical Tradition', 68; Jeffreys, 'Attitudes', 207.

<sup>124</sup> Magdalino, 'Kaiserkritik', 333–5.

<sup>125</sup> Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Exegesis*, 226.1–227.20.

<sup>126</sup> *Epitome*, I, 209–14. Apart from the *Epitome*, references to Daniel are also present in Malalas, the *Chronicon paschale*, George the Synkellos and George the Monk, from whom Kedrenos draws information about Daniel for his own work. However, with the exception of the *Chronicon paschale*, where we find a detailed paraphrase only of the second chapter of Daniel, none of these chronicles offers such an extensive account of Daniel's prophecies as the *Epitome*: G. Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reicheschatologie: die Periodisierung der Weltgeschichte in den vier Grossreichen (Daniel 2 und 7) und dem tausendjährigen Friedensreiche* (Munich, 1972), 57–61. For aspects of the treatment of Daniel in Byzantium, see W. J. Van Bakkum, 'Four Kingdoms Will Rule: Echoes of Apocalypticism and Political Reality in Late Antiquity and Medieval Judaism', in *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, ed. by W. Brandes and F. Schmieder (New York, 2008), 101–18.



had already been reflected in Josephus' *JA* in the first century AD, and is clearly seen in later commentaries on Daniel, such as those produced by Hippolytus of Rome, Origen, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus.<sup>127</sup>

For his narrative of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation of it, Zonaras mainly follows Josephus,<sup>128</sup> from whom he takes the term 'statue' ('ἀνδριάς'), instead of 'image' ('εἰκὼν'), which we find in the biblical text, to denote the gigantic figure appearing in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. To identify the empires, he is likely to have taken material from Theodoret. The most important part of Zonaras' exegesis of Daniel 2 is the final section, which must have been original to the author. By making an extensive political digression, Zonaras presents the 'flaws' of certain political systems of Rome.<sup>129</sup> What stands out particularly is his presentation of Republican Rome and the negative opinion he expresses about the Roman people, 'the crowd' ('τὸ πλῆθος'). In the context of the Roman Republic, the iron represents the senate, 'because of the firmness of judgement' ('διὰ τὸ τῆς γνώμης στερέμνιον'), whereas the clay represents the crowd, to which the writer attributes a series of negative traits: vulgarity, lowliness, changeability, and weakness of mind. The author notes that the mob is easily misled and changes its mind, as can be seen throughout the history of the Empire. Discord, too, was among the major 'defects' of the republican system of government. The senate and the crowd would occasionally fall into dispute and revolts would occur as a result. From these observations, it can be inferred that Zonaras was ill-disposed towards the republican form of government. This was mainly because of the great power held by the masses, who could be easily manipulated and led astray.

According to the chronicler, moreover, when monarchy was established, Rome experienced periods of internal discord due to civil wars, such as those between Julius Caesar and Pompey, and between Augustus and Mark Antony. Referring to the reign of later emperors, the author says the Roman Empire was stronger in certain places, but weaker in others. He regrets that the Byzantium of his time had lost many of the territories which had once belonged to the Empire. Zonaras' political interpretation of Daniel 2 is unique among Byzantine chroniclers, and indeed among the Byzantine authors we know.

That the chronicler had a good overall understanding of Roman politics is also indicated by his attempt to describe the mechanisms of constitutional change, particularly the manner in which the Roman state was transformed from a republic into a monarchy. In the Late Republican Period, according to Zonaras, 'the Roman polity was suffering, and Roman leaders verged on tyranny'

<sup>127</sup> For the Christian interpretations of Daniel, see the detailed analysis of J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis, 1993), 112–17.

<sup>128</sup> *Epitome*, I, 209–12. Cf. Josephus, *JA*, II, 374–6 (Book 10, chapters 203–10). The characterization of the figure as 'ἀνδριάς' can be found at 375.9–10 in the text of Josephus.

<sup>129</sup> *Epitome*, I, 212–14.



(ἐνόσει Ῥωμαίοις τὰ πράγματα, καὶ ἐπὶ τυραννίδα οἱ σφῶν ἀπέκλινον ἄρχοντες').<sup>130</sup> Elsewhere in his narrative he explains that Romans did not allow dictators to hold their office for more than six months, because they could easily be enticed by power and seek to rule as monarchs. Zonaras believes that this is what happened with Caesar.<sup>131</sup> A crucial point in Roman political history was when Antony and Augustus rose to power; it was then that Romans were deprived of their republic, although a monarchical form of government had not been officially established.<sup>132</sup> The 'genuine' Roman monarchy, according to Zonaras, was inaugurated when Augustus defeated his rival and gained absolute control of the Empire.

What makes the chronicler's account of this process particularly interesting is the language he uses. It is of great importance to him to make his readers understand the subtle difference between 'a monarchy in disguise' and 'a genuine monarchy'.<sup>133</sup> This is also evidenced by Zonaras' attempts to find the appropriate terminology to describe the forms of government operating during the lives of Caesar and Augustus. As can be seen in the extract from the proem quoted earlier,<sup>134</sup> the author uses 'μὴ καθαρῶς', an adverbial phrase he himself coined, to indicate that Caesar was essentially ruling as a monarch, although the Republic had not yet been abolished. This was an idiosyncratic form of government, 'a monarchy in disguise'. Later in his prologue, Zonaras provides the opposite term, one which denotes 'a genuine monarchy', to refer to the form of government under Augustus. In particular, he says that 'in this manner Octavius returned to Rome with splendid triumphs, gained sole rule and transformed rulership of the Romans into a genuine monarchy' ('οὕτω μετ' ἐπινικίων λαμπρῶν εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἐπανελθὼν ὁ Ὀκτάβιος τῆς αὐταρχίας ἀντεποιήσατο καὶ εἰς ἀκριβῆ μοναρχίαν τὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν μετήνεγκε').<sup>135</sup> Unlike for the earlier period, the terminology used in this excerpt is not original to the author. The phrase 'ἀκριβῆς μοναρχία' is taken directly from Dio's history, where it is similarly employed for the state in the age of Augustus. When Zonaras' account reaches the time of Augustus, he quotes almost verbatim the section of Dio's passage in which this phrase appears.<sup>136</sup>

However, he occasionally tries to create his own political vocabulary. Let us look at how the two authors define the constitution in the time of Antony and Augustus.

Dio:

The Roman people were deprived of the republican form of government, but were not led to a genuine monarchy. Antony and Caesar ruled the political

<sup>130</sup> *Epitome*, II, 298.16–299.1.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.10–14.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.19–23.

<sup>133</sup> Zonaras' attention to correct vocabulary in general was stressed by Grigoriadis in his study of the *Epitome's* linguistic aspects: Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 79–80.

<sup>134</sup> See p. 102 of this book.

<sup>135</sup> *Epitome*, I, 14.1–4.

<sup>136</sup> *Epitome*, II, 408.13–17. Cf. Dio, *History*, II, 379 (Book 52.1).

affairs as equals [...] After that, when Sextus had passed away, the Armenian king had been caught, those who had carried on a war against Augustus were at rest and the Persian enemy was not causing any trouble, they openly turned against each other and people really became slaves.

Ὁ δὲ δῆμος ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων τῆς μὲν δημοκρατίας ἀφήρητο, οὐ μέντοι καὶ ἐς μοναρχίαν ἀκριβῆ ἀπεκέκριτο, ἀλλ' ὁ τε Ἀντώνιος καὶ ὁ Καίσαρ ἐξ ἴσου ἔτι τὰ πράγματα εἶχον, [...] Μετὰ δὲ δὴ τοῦτο, ὡς ὁ τε Σέξτος ἀπωλώλει καὶ ὁ Ἀρμένιος ἐαλώκει τὰ τε προσπολεμήσαντα τῷ Καίσαρι ἡσύχαζε καὶ ὁ Πάρθος οὐδὲν παρεκίνει, καὶ ἐκείνους φανερώς ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ἐτράποντο καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἀκριβῶς ἐδουλώθη.<sup>137</sup>

Zonaras:

The Romans were deprived of the republican form of government, but did not lapse into a manifest monarchy until Sextus passed away and the nations that had revolted were enslaved and the Persian enemy was not causing any trouble. For then Antony and Caesar openly turned against each other, and people really became slaves.

Οἱ μέντοι Ῥωμαῖοι τὴν μὲν δημοκρατίαν ἀφήρητο, οὐ μὴν καὶ εἰς φανεράν μοναρχίαν κατώλισθον, ἕως ὁ τε Σέξτος ἀπόλετο καὶ τὰ ἐπαναστάνα ἔθνη δεδούλωτο καὶ ὁ Πάρθος οὐδὲν παρεκίνει. Τότε γὰρ φανερώς ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ὁ Ἀντώνιος καὶ ὁ Καίσαρ ἐτράποντο, καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἀκριβῶς ἐδουλώθη.<sup>138</sup>

Dio tells us that, although the republican form of government was lost to the Roman people, the rule of Anthony and Augustus was not 'a genuine monarchy' (μοναρχία ἀκριβῆς). In his paraphrase of Dio's text, Zonaras coins his own term, 'a manifest monarchy' (φανερὰ μοναρχία). Although Zonaras' term does not precisely render Dio's meaning, the chronicler seems to have understood the overall context of his source very well, and might have used the adverb 'φανερῶς', found shortly after in Dio's account, to create his own terminology.

The chronicler's emphasis on the concept of a 'genuine monarchy', the type of government under Augustus, served a practical purpose: to account for the discrepancy in the duration of Augustus' reign between Eusebios of Caesarea's *Church History*, the main source of Zonaras for the history of the Church, and other historical works.<sup>139</sup> This discrepancy led to a second one in the dating of a significant event which occurred in this period—the birth of Christ. As Zonaras points out, Eusebios, his main source for ecclesiastical affairs, writes that Augustus reigned for fifty-seven years in total, counting from the year that he took the reins of the Roman Empire along with Antony. He thus dates Christ's birth to the forty-second year of Augustus' monarchy. Other authors, however, believe that the

<sup>137</sup> Dio, *History*, II, 324.9–11, 324.14–17 (Book 50.1).

<sup>138</sup> *Epitome*, II, 391.19–23.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 431.12–432.21.

reign of Augustus began with the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, when he defeated Antony, and lasted for forty-four years. Zonaras inclines to the second view and accepts that only the years after Actium should count as the period when Augustus 'truly reigned' ('ἀληθῶς ἐμονάρχησε').<sup>140</sup> The chronicler, therefore, concludes that the birth of Christ occurred 'in the twenty-ninth year of Caesar Augustus' genuine monarchy' ('ἐν γούν τῷ εἰκοστῷ ἐνάτῳ τῆς ἀκριβοῦς μοναρχίας τοῦ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου').<sup>141</sup> Here, Zonaras not only tries to explain what appears to be a contradiction between *Church History* and other works but also shows how crucial it is for authors to employ accurate terminology if they are to avoid causing confusion among their readers. Furthermore, this discrepancy in the duration of Augustus' rule reflects an overall confusion among later writers about the gradual transition of the Roman state from a republic to a monarchy.

To conclude, all these observations illustrate that Zonaras' prodigious interest in the Roman origins of Byzantium was a result of intellectual, cultural, and historical processes taking place in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Unlike the majority of Byzantine chroniclers, Zonaras discussed Republican Rome in detail in order to fulfil his own authorial agenda, which was to stress the institutional continuity between contemporary Byzantium and Rome. Although an awareness of continuity with the Roman polity is commonly reflected in Byzantine literature, with Xiphilinos' statement noted earlier a precise rendering of it,<sup>142</sup> in Zonaras' case, Byzantine continuity with the Roman tradition is a theme wholly integrated into his project.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 431.19.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 432.18–19.

<sup>142</sup> See p. 89 of this book.

## 6

# Intellectual Networks and Intended Readers

### 6.1 The Intellectual Networks Surrounding Zonaras

The proem of the *Epitome* conveys the image of a self-exiled author composing his work in isolation and seclusion. Beginning his proem, Zonaras emphatically states that he has ‘chosen to live all alone and condemn himself to an eternal exile’ (‘καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἐλόμενον ζῆν ἀειφυγίαν τε ἑαυτοῦ καταψηφισάμενον’).<sup>1</sup> Although he presents his decision to withdraw from public life as a voluntary one, he laments that, confined to ‘this edge of the world’ (‘παρὰ τῆ ἑσχατιᾷ ταύτῃ’), he does not have access to all the source material required for his writing.<sup>2</sup> The point that the author demonstrably wishes to impress upon his audience is that the place in which he is currently living is extremely remote. This is repeated with greater vehemence when Zonaras excuses himself for being unable to find books covering the Late Roman Republic. There, he uses the marked adjective ‘ὑπερόριος’ (‘living beyond the borders’, ‘being in exile’) to highlight the physical distance that separates him from Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> It is made clear that the ‘ὄρια’, the borders, are in this case those of the imperial capital in the very next phrase: ‘because I [Zonaras] live in an islet away from the city (‘πόρρω τοῦ ἄστεος ἐν νησίδι ἐνδιαιτώμενος’). To display his erudition here, the chronicler uses the classicizing word ‘ἄστυ’; the choice of this term, which means a town and its buildings, instead of ‘πόλις’, which denotes a social and political entity,<sup>4</sup> implies that the writer is far away from anything civilized and explains his ‘ἀπορία’, the limited resources available to him on his island. What emerges, in other words, from Zonaras’ narrative is a sense of regret for his absence from Constantinople. Within this context, his engagement with writing is understood as a remedy, or a consolation, for the state of indolence in which he has found himself at the monastery (‘σχολάζοντα’, ‘ῥαστώνῃ συζῶν’).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Epitome*, I, 3.4–5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.13.

<sup>3</sup> *Epitome*, II, 297.21–2.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, one of the meanings offered by *LSJ* for the lemma ‘ἄστυ’: ‘III. town in the material sense, opp. πόλις (the civic body)’.

<sup>5</sup> *Epitome*, I, 4.9, and 7.11–12, respectively. Let us note that the verb ‘σχολάζω’ used by the writer as regards his current state designates a change of circumstances. It means that someone was active in the past, but no longer is. One of the meanings offered from the lemma ‘σχολάζω’ by *LSJ* is ‘have rest or respite from a thing, cease from doing’. Zonaras hints that he is idle right now, but was not so in the past, obviously when he was still in Constantinople.

In fact, however, the place where the *Epitome* was written was by no means 'the edge of the world'. As was mentioned in the first chapter, Zonaras is known to have produced his chronicle at the monastery of the Theotokos Pantanassa on the island of St Glykeria.<sup>6</sup> This tiny island, located in the bay of Tuzla on the eastern shore of the Sea of Marmara, is only a few kilometres southeast of Constantinople.<sup>7</sup> There are two important questions to ask here. Does the image of Zonaras as an isolated retiree correspond to the reality? How did he manage to acquire the impressive variety of sources he exploited in the *Epitome*?

It is interesting that the earliest mention of the island of St Glykeria, found in the *Life of Niketas*, the abbot of the Medikion monastery, is in relation to exile.<sup>8</sup> Between 816 and 821, the saint was banished to the island by the emperor Leo V the Armenian (r. 813–820) and was reportedly put in prison by the chief of the monasteries there, a malicious man named Anthimos. The text gives no additional information about the monastic community of the period.<sup>9</sup> The monastery dedicated to St Glykeria is likely to have been founded by Ignatios, the patriarch of Constantinople, some time prior to his accession to the patriarchal throne in 847,<sup>10</sup> but appears to have been abandoned soon afterwards. It was rebuilt in the early twelfth century with the support of wealthy patrons and was rededicated to the Theotokos Pantanassa.<sup>11</sup> The rebuilding campaign of the monastery culminated in May 1142 with the reconsecration of its church.<sup>12</sup> Significantly, the Pantanassa monastery was among those with properties guaranteed by the chrysobull granted by the emperor Manuel Komnenos in 1158.<sup>13</sup> This suggests that the second and third quarter of the twelfth century, roughly the period when Zonaras found himself at the Pantanassa, was a time of relative economic prosperity for its community.<sup>14</sup> It is apparent that the monastery was well enough

<sup>6</sup> See p. 9 of this book.

<sup>7</sup> For the topography of the area, see Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices', 224.

<sup>8</sup> Theosteriktos, *De S. Niceta Confessore. Vita*, AASS, April I, 254B–265F, at 31 (chapter 43). The text was written by a certain Theosteriktos, a monk at the Medikion monastery: A. Alexakis, 'A Florilegium in the Life of Nicetas of Medicion and a Letter of Theodore of Studios', *DOP*, 48 (1994), 179–97, at 193–4.

<sup>9</sup> For the history of monasticism on the island of St Glykeria, see R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins* (Paris, 1975), 56–7.

<sup>10</sup> Niketas David Paphlagon, *Nicetas David The Life of Patriarch Ignatius*, ed. and trans. into English by A. Smithies with notes by J. A. Duffy (Washington, 2013), 14.24–30 (chapter 11), in which we learn about Ignatios' campaign of establishing monasteries on the small Princes' Islands.

<sup>11</sup> See Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices', 221–2 (the scribal note found in the *Christ Church Wake graecus* 51).

<sup>12</sup> The precise date of the reconsecration is given in the *Christ Church Wake gr.* 51. There, we also find the names of the two patrons who undertook the rebuilding of the church: Gregory Taronites and Basil, both of whom were monks at the Pantanassa monastery: Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices'. Basil is said to have collected large donations for the rebuilding of the monastery.

<sup>13</sup> Manuel's chrysobull secures the properties of the monasteries located in Constantinople and its nearby regions, as well as those of the islands in the Sea of Marmara: *Jus Graecoromanum*, ed. by I. and P. Zepos, I (Athens, 1931; repr. Athens, 1962), 381–5. See also Angold, *Church and Society*, 87.

<sup>14</sup> Mango, too, deduces that the first half of the twelfth century was 'a period of considerable distinction' for the monastery of the Pantanassa: Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices', 228. See also

known to attract patronage and that it had established ties with the imperial court. This last point is reinforced when one considers that a certain Joseph, the first known abbot of the monastery of Christ Pantokrator in Constantinople, the foundation built and endowed by the emperor John Komnenos and his wife Irene, was previously abbot of the Pantanassa.

The conclusion to draw is that the island of St Glykeria and its monastery were by no means on the 'edge of the world'. Zonaras' apparent distortion of reality has been explained by Magdalino in terms of 'the rhetoric of exile' employed by the chronicler.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, exile was one of the dominant themes in the literary production, both prose and poetry, of the twelfth century. In her analysis of a large corpus of epistles penned by exiled writers, Margaret Mullett has identified several motifs which characterized the discourse of exile. These include: poverty; the contrast between an intellectual's current circumstances and previous life in Constantinople; exile as a life sentence; the lack of learning; and barbarism.<sup>16</sup> Thematic elements such as these can also be found in Zonaras' account. The motif of poverty, for example, underlies the author's complaints about the shortage of books in his monastery, something which contrasts with the range of works that would have been available to him in the capital. Additionally, he exploits vocabulary typical of exile literature, namely 'ὑπερόριος' and 'ἐσχατιά'. The use by Zonaras of *topoi* and language reminiscent of the theme of exile shows that the chronicler shared the attitude frequently observed among the literati of the late eleventh and the twelfth century, a period in which Constantinople became increasingly important: that confinement to any place outside of the city essentially constituted an expulsion from the intellectual and cultural life of the Empire. Zonaras, too, appears to feel the loss of Constantinople keenly. Whether he was indeed cut off from the intellectual circles of the capital remains to be seen.

In my view, the employment of thematic motifs and language strongly suggestive of the exile discourse was a deliberate choice by Zonaras. I would argue that he uses these rhetorical devices not merely to account for the sources that he did *not* manage to find, but rather to stress the impressive number and variety of the material that he *did* succeed in collecting. By relating the purported difficulties that he had to overcome in order to bring his project to fruition, Zonaras seeks to highlight, even to overstate, the extent of his achievement in the eyes of his readers. The theme of exile provides him with the narrative framework to advertise his work not only as a product of his literary and scholarly activity but also as a result of hard labour. One may suggest, in addition, that the treatment of

J. Nesbitt, N. Oikonomides and E. McGeer, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, III (Washington, 1996), 111–12 for a twelfth-century seal originating from the Pantanassa.

<sup>15</sup> Magdalino, 'Constantinople and the "ἔω Χῶραι"', 183–5; Magdalino, 'Outside World', 149.

<sup>16</sup> M. Mullett, 'Originality and Byzantine Letter-Writing: The Case of Exile', in *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music*, ed. by A. Littlewood (Oxford, 1996), 39–58.

topoi of exile writing, particularly Zonaras' description of how he copes on a tiny island where there is a shortage of sources, was a means by which the author appealed to members of his circle outside the Pantanassa monastery to continue to support him by sending him books to read and exploit for the works he was writing.<sup>17</sup>

Zonaras must have developed ties with members of the cultural Constantinopolitan elite prior to his withdrawal from public affairs, perhaps by attending the *theatra*, the social gatherings at which literary compositions were read aloud.<sup>18</sup> The audience of a *theatron* would include aristocrats, court officials, high-ranking civil servants, ecclesiastical men, and teachers of grammar and rhetoric. As a learned man who worked in the higher echelons of civil administration, Zonaras, too, probably attended such gatherings, which would offer a good opportunity to befriend fellow intellectuals. Moreover, because of his profession as a judge and a high-ranking bureaucrat, he would have been part of a wider nexus of social relationships. His acquaintances would certainly include juridical functionaries and bureaucrats.

Significant in this context is that Zonaras was apparently held in high esteem among the administrators of justice of his time, even after his retirement to St Glykeria. This is attested primarily by Zonaras' exegesis of the canons, a work he produced during his stay at the Pantanassa and completed in or after 1161.<sup>19</sup> His commentary on canon law must have been intended as an interpretative manual that would be used not only by the monastic community of the Pantanassa but also by the ecclesiastical courts and the Patriarchate.<sup>20</sup> On the assumption that it was written after Zonaras' tonsure, the treatise *On the prohibition of the marriage of two cousins related in the sixth degree to the same woman* may also point to the fact that the author kept in touch with ecclesiastical circles while at his monastery.<sup>21</sup> Taken in conjunction, these ideas strongly suggest that although no longer practising the law and despite being absent from the capital, Zonaras was still consulted about legal matters. This indicates that the author must have retained his connections with at least some of his former colleagues.

<sup>17</sup> A secondary aspect that that may also underlie the topos of exile in Zonaras' narrative is that of exile in a monastic sense. In monastic contexts, we often read that monks are 'ξένοι', strangers, to the earthly kingdom. They feel 'exiled' from the true fatherland, paradise. However, Zonaras' claim that he lives in a place far away from the capital and that, because of this, lacks some sources required for his work indicate that the chronicler primarily connects the theme of exile to the image of the exiled intellectual.

<sup>18</sup> For a thorough analysis of the *theatra* under the Komnenian emperors, see Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 339–56; M. Mullett, 'Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Komnenian Constantinople', in *The Byzantine Aristocracy*, ed. by M. Angold (Edinburgh, 1984), 173–201.

<sup>19</sup> For the dating of the text, see pp. 12–13 of this book.

<sup>20</sup> Pieler, too, indicates that Zonaras wrote 'as a monk for his church': Pieler, 'Johannes Zonaras als Kanonist', 603. For the uses of the exegetical works on the canons, see Magdalino, 'Constantinople and the "ξω Χώρα"', 181.

<sup>21</sup> For more information on this text, see p. 17 of this book.

It must have been thanks to the contacts he maintained with his acquaintances outside the Pantanassa monastery that the chronicler managed to acquire the large amount of source material he used in the *Epitome*. For a society in which manuscripts were extremely valuable objects, the exchange of books between intellectuals was central to literary and intellectual life.<sup>22</sup> To access a book they did not have available, educated Byzantines would probably borrow it from someone who belonged to the same literati circle or the same literary salon. Subsequently, they would memorize or copy out parts of it. Interestingly, regarding the availability of manuscripts specifically in Constantinople in the first half of the twelfth century, we know that, during the period when he was Patriarch (1111–1134), John IX Agapetos fostered the copying of many classical works for public use.<sup>23</sup>

Zonaras would probably write letters from his monastery to acquaintances requesting that they send or lend him manuscripts. Strong proof of his correspondence with learned men outside St Glykeria can be found in the proem of his commentary on the fifty-nine *Gnomic Tetrastichs* of Gregory of Nazianzos. In the analysis of the text in the first chapter, I pointed out that the author composed this work during his old age to send to a friend, probably a monk, via whom he had previously received a similar kind of exegesis to Gregory's work.<sup>24</sup> As we read:

If it is not possible for me to attain in every matter the intellect of the great father and theologian, so that in this way my work will be beyond criticism, complete and worthy of the greatness of that father, my interpretation may well be better than the one included in the book you sent me, because of the extreme brevity [of that interpretation]. Why should I say anything more? So, I think that my writing will not be considered by you to be worthless in comparison.

εἰ δὲ καὶ μὴ τῆς ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ διανοίας τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ θεηλόγου πατρὸς ἐφικέσθαι μοι γένηται, ἴν' οὕτως εἴη μοι τὸ ἔργον ἀνεπίληπτον καὶ ἄρτιον, καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλονοίας ἐπάξιον, ἀλλὰ γε τελεωτέρα εἴη ἂν ἡ ἐξήγησις τῆς ἐγκειμένης τῇ βίβλῳ, τῇ παρὰ σοῦ κομισθείσῃ μοι, διὰ τὸ ἐκείνης στενὸν κομιδῆ. εἰ γάρ τι πλέον ἐρῶ, καὶ οὕτω δὲ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον οἰμαί σοι τὸ πόνημα λογισθήσεται κατὰ σύγκρισιν.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> For an overview of the history of books in Byzantium, see J. Waring, 'Byzantine Book Culture', in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. by James, 275–88.

<sup>23</sup> Theodore Prodromos, *Θεοδώρου του Προδρόμου Λόγος εις τον πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Ιωάννη Θ' τον Αγαπητόν*, ed. by K. Manafis, *Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, 41 (1974), 239–41. See also Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 323.

<sup>24</sup> See p. 24 of this book.

<sup>25</sup> Zonaras, *Ἐρμηνεία εἰς τὰ τετράστιχα*, f. 3, line 23–f. 3<sup>v</sup>, line 6.



Noteworthy is that here a two-way exchange of books is recorded, which implies that Zonaras was part of a group of literati from whom he received source material, and to whom he was able to send his own works. We do not learn whether it was Zonaras who asked his friend to despatch a manuscript containing an interpretation of Gregory's work, or whether the sender of the book did this on his own initiative. Making a literary critique of the book he received, the author disapproves of its extremely succinct style and invites his addressee to compare his own text with it.

The nature of the work may give us a hint of the professional status of Zonaras' addressee. As was explained in Chapter 1, exegetical works of religious poems were specifically designed by teachers for didactic purposes.<sup>26</sup> It can be suggested, therefore, that the scholar for whom the writer composed his commentary was a teacher. This person asked his friend Zonaras, who might also have worked as a teacher in his youth, to assess the exegesis of Gregory's *Tetrastichs* that he used in his lessons. Not satisfied with the work he read, Zonaras wrote and sent his own commentary to his friend in order to assist him with his classes. He would not have been the only author who produced an exegesis for the use of another teacher. Zonaras' near-contemporary Eustathios of Thessalonike also did this, penning a commentary on the Pentecostal canon attributed to John of Damascus. Silvia Ronchey has demonstrated that Eustathios composed this text after abandoning his post at the Patriarchal School and being appointed bishop of Thessalonike for several years.<sup>27</sup> Although no longer teaching, Eustathios was requested to produce this commentary by a colleague, perhaps a clergyman and teacher at the Patriarchal School, who wished to use it for his own lectures.

The suggestion that Zonaras was in touch with highly educated men outside his monastery may be corroborated by his exegesis of the Resurrectional Canons in the *Octoechos*, a work he composed when he was a monk.<sup>28</sup> Zonaras himself informs us that he produced the commentary at the instigation of a bishop of Thessalonike, most likely Niketas 'of Maroneia'. The fact that the chronicler was engaged in such scholarly interaction proves that he had links with ecclesiastical men high up in the hierarchy of the Church. Such individuals, who had much better access to reading material, might have helped Zonaras to acquire sources essential for his enquiry and also to publicize his work to audiences outside the Pantanassa monastery.

A point which needs to be emphasized here is that the group of literati to which Zonaras belonged apparently included not only laymen but also members of the clergy and monks. It is clear that a small number of monks had some or a good knowledge of Greek and were able to read the writings of the Church Fathers and

<sup>26</sup> See p. 9 of this book.

<sup>27</sup> Ronchey, 'An Introduction to Eustathios'.

<sup>28</sup> For more information on this text, see p. 22 of this book.

other ecclesiastical authors. This could have been the case, for example, with abbots of monasteries and monks who were in charge of monastic libraries.

It is safe to deduce that Zonaras must have acquired sources essential for the composition of his chronicle through his correspondence with a group of people outside his monastery. Enlightening in this respect is the extract from the *Epitome* in which the chronicler explains why he will not relate the events of the late Republican period.

[...] and this [the fact that he will skip the Roman Republic due to the lack of books] although I repeatedly searched for them, but I did not find them and I do not know whether they may not be preserved, with time having destroyed them, or whether they to whom I made this request did not search very diligently, while I myself am in exile and live on an islet away from the city.

[...] καὶ ταῦτα πολλάκις ζητήσαντί μοι ταύτας, μὴ εὐρηκότι δ' ὅμως, οὐκ οἶδα εἴθ' ὅτι μὴ σώζοιντο, τοῦ χρόνου διεφθαρκότος αὐτάς, εἴθ' ὅτι μὴ φροντιστικώτερον τὴν τούτων ἴσως ζήτησιν ἐποιήσαντο οἷς αὐτὴν ἀνεθέμην, αὐτὸς ὑπερόριος ὢν καὶ πόρρω τοῦ ἄστεος ἐν νησίδι ἐνδιαιτώμενος.<sup>29</sup>

This short passage makes it obvious that when composing his historical account, Zonaras did not have all the books he needed readily available to him and had to ask third parties to seek them out. He uses the pronoun 'αὐτός' to underline that *he* lives away from the capital, while *they*, the people to whom he appeals, are present in Constantinople and therefore have much better access to books. The adverb 'πολλάκις' indicates that his correspondence with them was regular, especially if his request for a book was not granted, as is the case here. The writer appears to be mildly dissatisfied with those to whom he made his plea, expressing his doubt about whether they had diligently looked for the material he had requested.

Despite Zonaras' claims that he lived a secluded life on St Glykeria, we should also allow for the possibility that he was actually able to leave his monastery from time to time and collect manuscripts himself. In his commentary on the canons, Zonaras alludes to his presence in the capital for Manuel Komnenos' wedding to Maria of Antioch in 1161. He explicitly states that he had witnessed the patriarch and several metropolitans bless an emperor who proceeded to make a second marriage. An imperial wedding was certainly a special occasion, but there is no reason to believe that Zonaras would not have the chance to make the short journey to Constantinople once in a while. Likewise, other members of the Pantanassa would have been able to visit the city and perhaps look for books for Zonaras' use. The same probably holds true for people who wished to take the

<sup>29</sup> *Epitome*, II, 297.18–21.

opposite route—secular men or monks who resided in the capital and wanted to visit St Glykeria. When acquaintances of Zonaras found themselves at the Pantanassa, they might have offered him material to use for his works.

Joseph, the abbot of the Pantanassa and subsequently of the Pantokrator monastery, may have played a key role in the creation of an intellectual network connecting the Pantanassa to the capital. He must have assumed his post at the Pantokrator sometime prior to October 1136, when the *typikon* of the monastery was drawn up.<sup>30</sup> If Zonaras had retired to the Pantanassa before that date, he would have been acquainted with Joseph, as they would have been members of the same monastic community. His career as abbot of the Pantokrator shows Joseph to have been a man engaged with cultural and artistic activities who had connections with prominent members of Constantinopolitan literary circles. We know of his correspondence with the well-known scholar John Tzetzes, whom he would lavish with gifts.<sup>31</sup> Also, he famously commissioned and sent as a gift to the Pantanassa monastery the impressive *Sinaiticus gr.* 339, an illuminated manuscript containing the liturgical *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzos, most likely to mark the reconsecration of its church.<sup>32</sup> His donation to the Pantanassa is a clear indication that he maintained strong links with the spiritual home to which he formerly belonged; it can be explained in terms of the Pantokrator's overall policy of trying to bring a broader group of monastic foundations under its influence.<sup>33</sup> Within this framework, it seems highly plausible that Joseph remained in contact with some of his well-read acquaintances at the Pantanassa, perhaps with Zonaras, too, and that he sent them books from the capital. They, in turn, would be able to provide him with their own writings.

So far this analysis has shown that Zonaras was sent books from his circle of acquaintances outside the island of St Glykeria. In addition, he might have (a) searched for manuscripts himself when he travelled to the capital, (b) asked monks leaving the Pantanassa for a while to find manuscripts for him, and (c) received source material from visitors to the monastery.

<sup>30</sup> The *typikon* of the Pantokrator has been edited by Paul Gautier: *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator*; information about Joseph can be found at 21–3. See also Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices', 227. Magdalino has postulated that the *typikon* of the Pantanassa might have been used as a prototype for that of the Pantokrator: P. Magdalino, 'The Foundation of the Pantokrator in Its Urban Setting', in *The Pantokrator Monastery*, ed. by Kotzabassi, 33–56, at 40.

<sup>31</sup> John Tzetzes, *Ioannis Tzetzae epistulae*, ed. by P. Leone (Leipzig, 1972), 72–3 (letter 51), 74–5 (letters 53 and 54), 99–100 (letter 70), 117–18 (letter 79).

<sup>32</sup> Mango, 'Twelfth-Century Notices', 227. A scribal entry found in f. 3<sup>r</sup> of the manuscript reveals that its patron was 'the abbot of the imperial monastery of Pantokrator, the monk Joseph Hagioglykerites': Peers, *Sacred Shock*, 155 (note 6); H. Evans and W. Wixon, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), 109–10.

<sup>33</sup> The Pantanassa monastery is not listed among those which were officially under the jurisdiction of the abbot of the Pantokrator: *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator*, 69.685–73.727. As noted by Peers, though, the Pantokrator had numerous holdings on the Asiatic shore across from Constantinople, and the monastery on the island of St Glykeria could fit within this scheme: *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator*, 115.1446–125.1576; Peers, *Sacred Shock*, 63–4.

Another issue to address is the amount and type of material that could have been available to him in the library of his monastery. Earlier in this chapter, Zonaras' complaints about the limited resources available to him at the Pantanassa were interpreted as a topos of exile literature. Nonetheless, the dissatisfaction expressed by the author could reflect reality, too. For the composition of a work such as the *Epitome*, which contains various and disparate material, the holdings of the Pantanassa library would certainly have been inadequate. According to Nigel Wilson, typical monastic libraries would not possess a large number of manuscripts, usually under a hundred.<sup>34</sup> Of these, the overwhelming majority would be biblical, liturgical, and patristic. Michael Angold adds that monastic collections would occasionally include an array of religious works, such as theological treatises, commentaries, and saints' lives.<sup>35</sup> As we learn from the *typika* of monastic complexes built by members of the elite, their founders would sometimes provide their establishments with considerable land and property, collections of manuscripts included. Gregory Pakourianos, for example, a prominent general of the late eleventh and early twelfth century, offered thirty books to his foundation, the Theotokos Petritzonitissa in modern Bulgaria. All of them were of a religious character. The monastery of the Theotokos Kosmosoteira, established in c.1152, also owned a number of books bequeathed by its founder, the *sebastokrator* Isaac Komnenos. Among these was an illuminated manuscript containing secular works that Isaac had compiled himself. The *Diataxis* of Michael Attaleiates lists about seventy-nine books donated to the monastery of Christ Panoiktirmon that Attaleiates had built in Constantinople.<sup>36</sup> Apart from the Bible, liturgical, and hagiographical books, this list includes a copy of Josephus' *JW*, a *seismobrontologion*, the Hellenistic novel *Leukippe and Klitophon* by Achilles Tatius, and a 'chronicle composed by the founder.' Although these are examples of well-funded monasteries, they indicate, nonetheless, that, aside from the 'standard' religious works, certain monastic collections would also hold other types of texts. It seems probable to me that Joseph, as abbot of the Pantanassa monastery, would have fostered the acquisition or copying of manuscripts.<sup>37</sup> The expensive, luxurious manuscript of Gregory's *Homilies* he donated to the Pantanassa later on must have been intended as a treasured object to add to an already existing collection of books.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, 'The Libraries', 63, 71.

<sup>35</sup> Angold, *Church and Society*, 352–3.

<sup>36</sup> Krallis, *Politics*, 45–52.

<sup>37</sup> It appears to have been a usual practice for abbots of newly established monasteries to seek out books in order to set up a library. For instance, the twelfth-century saint Bartholome of Simeri, who established the monastery of St Maria del Patir in Rossano, is said to have appealed to the emperor Alexios Komnenos for liturgical books for the monastery: 'Il bios di San Bartolomeo da Simeri (BHG 235)', ed. by C. Zaccagni, in *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, 33 (1996), 205–28, at 221–2. See also S. Burkhardt and T. Foerster, *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage: Exchange of Cultures in the 'Norman' Peripheries of Medieval Europe* (Farnham, 2013), 110; Wilson, 'The Libraries', 56.

It is evident that, from the sources that he used in his *Epitome*, Zonaras would have certainly found the Bible in his monastery. Apart from this, though, it is hard to tell how many, if any, of the works that underpin the chronicle were among the holdings of the library. Its collection would perhaps have included a copy of Theodoret's *Commentary on Daniel*. There is no doubt that the secular texts used by Zonaras in his chronicle, such as those of Plutarch, Xenophon, Herodotus, and the Byzantine historians, were not available to him in the Pantanassa library. The writer certainly accessed them in another way.

A final possibility to consider is that he himself may have possessed a number of books which he brought along with him when he retired to St Glykeria.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, it is very likely that a knowledgeable man who occupied an important office in the bureaucratic administration would have owned some manuscripts. Yet how many of them Zonaras took with him to his monastery must remain a matter of conjecture.

## 6.2 The Intended Audience of the *Epitome*

To explore the intended audience of the *Epitome*, it is essential to begin with an issue which has not been addressed so far: the traditional division of historical accounts into histories and chronicles. Broadly speaking, works which relate events roughly contemporary with their writers, use Attic Greek, contain sophisticated and learned allusions to ancient Greek authors, and emulate the patterns of classical Greek historiographies that have been traditionally considered histories. For instance, the historical narratives of Agathias, Theophylaktos Simokattes, Anna Komnene, and George Pachymeres clearly fall into this category. Accounts which cover the period from the Creation of the world to the author's own day (or which continue a work commencing with the Creation), have an annalistic format, are written in a non-classicizing language and rely heavily on earlier material have traditionally been considered chronicles. Typical examples are the *Chronicon Paschale* and the works of John Malalas, George Synkellos, and Theophanes.

However, this sharp dichotomy between histories and chronicles, which implies a distinction between high and low literature, is no longer accepted.<sup>39</sup> The Byzantines themselves did not strictly distinguish chronicles from histories,<sup>40</sup> nor did they consider chronicles works of a lesser value or as the compositions of

<sup>38</sup> This suggestion is put forward by Treadgold as well: Treadgold, *Historians*, 393.

<sup>39</sup> The monumental article arguing against the strict distinction of chronicles from histories is that of Hans-Georg Beck, 'Zur byzantinischen "Mönschchronik"'. See also B. Croke, 'Uncovering Byzantium's Historiographical Audience', in *History as Literature*, ed. by Macrides, 25–54; Scott, 'Byzantine Chronicles'; Holmes, *Basil II*, 172–6; Markopoulos, *Η θέση του χρονολογράφου*.

<sup>40</sup> Scott, 'Byzantine Chronicles'.

uneducated authors. Hence, one frequently finds chronicles and histories included in a single manuscript.<sup>41</sup> Prime examples are the codices which transmit the *Epitome* along with the histories of Niketas Choniates, George Akropolites, or Nikephoros Gregoras. The last chapter will offer more information about such manuscripts.<sup>42</sup> The boundaries between the two genres became even looser when chroniclers abandoned the year-by-year account and, from the tenth century onwards, stopped using a relatively low linguistic register.<sup>43</sup> Beck highlighted that most chroniclers and historians came from similar social and professional backgrounds; they were high-ranking bureaucrats or Church officials, and were members of the imperial court.<sup>44</sup> The chroniclers' audience was not an illiterate mass, according to Beck. Rather, it was much the same audience for whom the historians were writing. It has been shown, in addition, that the authors of chronicles often sought to fulfil their own agenda, just as historians did.<sup>45</sup>

I agree with the view of Roger Scott that the classification of Byzantine historical narratives into histories and chronicles is one of convenience.<sup>46</sup> As long as we remember that this division is by no means a strict or clear one, distinguishing chronicles from histories can be useful for scholars. By terming an account a 'chronicle', one can immediately understand that it extends from the biblical Creation to the author's own time (or that it continues a text with this starting point) and that it is not written in pure Attic Greek. Adopting this perspective, I myself prefer to characterize the *Epitome* as a chronicle.

It should be stressed that, like many Byzantine writers, Zonaras does not distinguish chronicles from histories. In fact, he applies the term 'history' generically to all kinds of narratives of the past. Introducing the contents of his text, he states that readers 'will gain knowledge of many and most indispensable histories' ('πολλῶν τε καὶ τούτων ἀναγκαϊοτάτων ἱστοριῶν ἐν εἰδήσει γενήσονται') from the *Epitome*, including the Octateuch, the Books of Kings, the Books of Chronicles, and the works of Flavius Josephus.<sup>47</sup> He conceives of his own work as a 'short history' (' σύντομον ἱστορίαν').<sup>48</sup> In practice, though, he consciously rejects both the typical themes and the linguistic conventions of classical historiography. He disapproves of exhaustive accounts of strategies and military operations, as well as the inclusion of dialogues or long speeches by demagogues, generals, and emperors,<sup>49</sup> all traditional thematic elements of archaizing histories. He considers

<sup>41</sup> Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 105. <sup>42</sup> See p. 142 of this book.

<sup>43</sup> For this observation, see M. Hinterberger, 'Δημιώδης και λόγια λογοτεχνία: διαχωριστικές γραμμές και συνδετικοί κρίκοι', in *Pour une "nouvelle" histoire de la littérature byzantine*, ed. by P. Odorico and P. Agapitos (Paris, 2002), 153–63. The different linguistic registers of Byzantine texts have been studied in a well-known article by Ihor Ševčenko, who distinguished three linguistic levels: high, middle, and low: I. Ševčenko, 'Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose', *JÖB*, 31 (1981), 289–312.

<sup>44</sup> Beck, 'Zur byzantinischen "Mönschchronik"'

<sup>45</sup> Scott, 'Byzantine Chronicles', 40. <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>47</sup> *Epitome*, I, 9.10–14. <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.5–6.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.12–19, 5.1–3, 5.18–6.6.

complex, highbrow Greek to be unsuitable for the recording of history, expressing a negative opinion of authors who use extremely sophisticated constructions and compose their works to display their mastery of writing.<sup>50</sup> Comments along these lines are made by other chroniclers as well. George the Monk, for instance, criticizes earlier authors of historical accounts for employing such rhetorically ornate language that their narratives are incomprehensible to most people.<sup>51</sup> He says that, by contrast, his own style is characterized by 'utmost clarity' ('σαφηνείας ἐναργεστάτης').<sup>52</sup> Likewise, John Skylitzes sings the praises of George Synkellos and Theophanes for employing a 'simple, unaffected language' ('λόγω μὲν ἀφελεῖ καὶ ἀπεριέργω').<sup>53</sup> It is apparent that Zonaras sees himself as belonging to and following the tradition of earlier chroniclers, who chose to write in simpler, less heavily inflated language.

A few more words need to be said about the linguistic register of chronicles. Authors of chronicles do not make heavy use of erudite, purist vocabulary. Neither are they fond of the highly rhetorical, sophisticated grammatical and syntactical forms of classical Greek. As a rule, they write in 'middlebrow' Greek, combining features of the antiquated language of the learned tradition with idioms from the Bible or the spoken Greek of the time. Certainly, though, there is a wide range of stylistic levels within the confines of this register. To make a comparison, Zonaras writes towards the top end of the register, whereas his near-contemporary Michael Glykas uses classicizing language in moderation, mixing to a greater extent learned elements with ones approximating the speech of the people. What is significant is that the choice by chroniclers to compose accounts in a middlebrow style was deliberate and served a particular purpose, namely being better understood by their audiences.<sup>54</sup> By avoiding the difficult vocabulary and constructions of Attic Greek, chroniclers aimed to make their narratives accessible not only to a small group of highly learned individuals but also to a greater number of relatively well-educated readers.

The language of Zonaras is influenced by the language of the works that underpin his chronicle. The author himself states that he tends to draw on the phraseology of his source material and that even when he alters the text of his sources, he strives to remain faithful to their style.<sup>55</sup> The syntax in the *Epitome* can be quite complex, with long periods containing a series of participles.<sup>56</sup> The vocabulary is elegant, but not extremely refined or recondite.<sup>57</sup> Words typical of Attic vocabulary sometimes make their appearance, such as 'ὄμεινέτιδας'

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.19–5.2.

<sup>51</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, I, 1.1–10.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.7–9.

<sup>53</sup> Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 3.6–11 (proem). For the translation, see *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Erich Trapp has identified three reasons why a writer may use language of a lower register: poor classical education; to improve comprehension of the text by its audience; and stylistic choice: E. Trapp, 'Learned and Vernacular Literature in Byzantium', *DOP*, 47 (1993), 115–29.

<sup>55</sup> *Epitome*, I, 8.23–9.7.

<sup>56</sup> Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 84.

<sup>57</sup> For Zonaras' language and vocabulary in general, see Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 53–85.



(‘wives’),<sup>58</sup> ‘πρυτανεῖον’ (‘vault’),<sup>59</sup> ‘ξύμπασα’ (‘entire’)<sup>60</sup> and ‘ἀνακτί’ (‘to the emperor’).<sup>61</sup> We occasionally find nouns or pronouns in dual number, such as ‘ἀμφοῖν τοῖς ὁμαίμοσιν’ (‘to both brothers’) and ‘ἀδελφῶ’ (‘two brothers’).<sup>62</sup> Also, Zonaras relatively often uses verbal forms of the pluperfect, a tense which had long become obsolete, instead of forms of the aorist.<sup>63</sup> He attempted in this way to elevate his writing style and thus display his classical learning. Overall, Zonaras writes in a ‘mildly’ archaizing language, with elements of high style present but not prevalent in his text. The choice of register is evidently ‘strategic’ and relates to the chronicler’s wish to be understood by a relatively wide audience.

Interestingly, there exists evidence Zonaras’ readers responded positively to his preference for a middlebrow style. In a treatise preserved in the thirteenth-century *Par. gr.* 1715, the earliest manuscript of the *Epitome*, the owner of the codex writes the following: ‘Since (ideally) clear style is the characteristic of historians and of those who do not make an untimely demonstration of their strength in eloquence, he [Zonaras] cared for clarity inasmuch as this was demanded of him by his narrative’ (‘ἐπειδὴ τὸ σαφές τοῖς ἱστορικοῖς ἀνέλται καὶ μὴ ἐπίδειξιν ἄκαιρον τῆς ἐν λόγοις δυνάμεως ποιουμένοις, τοσοῦτον πεφρόντικεν ὅσον ὁ λόγος ἀπῆτει τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ διηγήσεως’).<sup>64</sup> This reader believes that the stylistic level of the chronicle is perfectly suited to a historical account, since Zonaras seeks to attain clarity rather than exhibit his rhetorical prowess.

The observations on the linguistic register of the *Epitome* may offer a clue to the profile of Zonaras’ intended audience. The chronicle was evidently addressed to cultivated readers, who would be able to understand Zonaras’ elevated prose. These readers would have followed a secondary education and would have had a good knowledge of grammar and rhetoric.<sup>65</sup> They would be familiar with polished pieces of writing, and were acquainted to some extent with the vocabulary of ancient Greek literature. This was largely the audience of the *theatra*—scholars, teachers, and officers high up in the hierarchy of the state and the Church.

<sup>58</sup> *Epitome*, III, 730.22.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 733.1.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 735.6.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 738.24.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 731.19–732.1.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Hinterberger has investigated how often and in what ways Zonaras, among other authors, makes use of the grammatical forms of the pluperfect: Hinterberger, ‘Die Sprache’, particularly at 115–16. The preference for pluperfect forms instead of aorist forms is a typical feature of highbrow Greek. Their interchangeable use attests to a significant development in the meaning and use of these tenses in Medieval Greek, namely that the functions of the pluperfect were taken over by the aorist. A similar development is noted in the meaning and use of the perfect tense as well: M. Hinterberger, ‘The Synthetic Perfect in Byzantine Literature’, in *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature*, ed. by M. Hinterberger (Turnhout, 2014), 176–204; Hinterberger, ‘Die Sprache’, 113–15; R. Browning, *Medieval and Modern Greek*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1983), 30, 64.

<sup>64</sup> *Commentary in the Par. gr. 1715*, 568.38–41. For the translation of the segment, see Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 114.

<sup>65</sup> An overview of the Byzantine educational system and earlier bibliography on the topic can be found in A. Markopoulos, ‘Teachers and Textbooks in Byzantium: Ninth to Eleventh Centuries’, in *Networks of Learning: Perspectives on Scholars in Byzantine East and Latin West*, ed. by S. Steckel, N. Gaul, and M. Grünbart (Münster, 2014), 3–15; A. Markopoulos, ‘Education’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. by R. Cormack, J. Haldon, and E. Jeffreys (Oxford, 2008), 785–95.



The references we find in the narrative to the chronicler's sources provide further testimony to the level of literacy of the anticipated readers of the *Epitome*. Zonaras envisaged an audience able to appreciate his use of prestigious Christian and pagan authors. Citing by name several writers on whom he had based his account, such as Flavius Josephus, Cassius Dio, Plutarch, Herodotus, and Xenophon, Zonaras manifestly expected his readers to be acquainted with their compositions. He encourages those keen on exploring a certain subject more closely to search for particular classical works. Readers who wish to delve into Roman history are advised to read the writings of Dio and Polybius, and those who want information about Cyrus the Great to read Herodotus' *Histories*.<sup>66</sup> Of note in the second case is that Zonaras indicates to his audience the exact part of Herodotus' work in which the story of Cyrus is recounted, namely *Clio*, the first book of the *Histories*. Equally exact are the references to his sources in other instances. One reads, for example, that Josephus mentions the name of the Babylonian king Belshazzar in the tenth book of the *Antiquities*, and that he records the birth of Christ in the eighteenth.<sup>67</sup> Here, the author offers direct references to his external sources in case his addressees wished to read the relevant passages for themselves. In other words, he assumes that his addressees would be interested in and able to find such material. Evidence of this kind attests once again to the social standing of Zonaras' intended readers. They were individuals who had the means to order the reproduction of manuscripts, were able to borrow books from a third party, and attended the *theatra* where many of the texts cited were read aloud.

Internal indications, furthermore, suggest that Zonaras had a predominantly Constantinopolitan audience in mind. As was demonstrated in the second chapter, the outline of the *Epitome*'s contents in the proem makes it clear that Constantinople will be the main subject of the text's Byzantine section.<sup>68</sup> The writer underlines that the focus of his attention will be on the secular and ecclesiastical authorities of the capital, namely emperors and patriarchs. This emphasis on the world of the imperial capital would appeal to readers who, like Zonaras himself, approached things from a metropolitan point of view and connected the history of Byzantium with that of its capital city, exhibiting considerably less interest in the affairs of the provinces of the Empire.<sup>69</sup>

A further interesting question to pose is whether the intended audience of the chronicle included churchmen and monks. As we saw earlier in the analysis of Zonaras' exegesis on Gregory's *Gnomic Tetrastichs* and his exegesis on the Resurrectional Canons in the *Octoechos*, the author was acquainted and

<sup>66</sup> *Epitome*, I, 227.15–16 and 303.8–11, respectively.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.1–4 and 479.1–3, respectively.

<sup>68</sup> See p. 31 of this book.

<sup>69</sup> For the emphasis placed by twelfth-century *literati* on Constantinople and their disparaging attitude towards the inhabitants of the provinces, see Magdalino, 'Outside World'; K. Galatariotou, 'Travel and Perception in Byzantium', *DOP*, 47 (1993), 221–41.

corresponded with monks and members of the Church who had a good level of literacy and had studied the works of the Church Fathers.<sup>70</sup> Certainly, most monks would not be able to read a text written in a mildly antiquated, literary language. Without a doubt, though, another work of Zonaras, the *Speech against those people who believe that a natural emission of sperm is a pollution*, was intended to be read by a group of literate monks. Providing information about this short text in Chapter 1, I noted that Zonaras condemns the belief current in some conservative monastic circles that monks who have wet dreams during the night become polluted.<sup>71</sup> What is significant is that, to reinforce his thesis, he recalls the wisdom of several well-known Church Fathers, quoting from the works of Paul, Dionysius of Alexandria, Timothy of Alexandria, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Basil the Great. Interestingly, one finds echoes of pagan authors, too. Zonaras makes a brief mention of the *Laws* of Plato and paraphrases an erotic story from the Plutarchean *Demetrius*. This ‘highly rhetorical’ essay is evidently directed at a small group of educated monks who knew (or at least knew of) the writings of the authors cited.<sup>72</sup> This audience would surely have been able to read the *Epitome*, too. Particularly appealing to clergymen and monks might have been the material on the history of the Church, as well as the early parts of the chronicle, where the chronicler combines information from the Old Testament and Josephus’ *JA*.

Like many chroniclers and historians, Zonaras produced his writings with the intention that they be read, not only by his contemporaries but by later audiences, too. This emerges from the manner in which he alludes to the reception of the text. His purpose in sketching a meticulous portrait of Alexios Komnenos is to inform later generations of the emperor’s character.<sup>73</sup> Two synonyms make their appearance here that indicate that Zonaras has the future recipients of his work in mind: ‘οἱ μετέπειτα’ and ‘οἱ ὀψίγονοί’. This forward-looking scope of the chronicle also underlies, for example, Zonaras’ intention to literally ‘hand over (to writing)’ (‘παραδοῦναι’) the history of the Roman nation and, consequently, to leave it to posterity.<sup>74</sup>

The language employed by Zonaras to refer to the addressees of his composition also needs a word of comment. So far in this discussion, I have used the generic terms ‘audience’ and ‘readers’ to designate the group to which the chronicler directed his work. The vocabulary employed by the author himself, however, is significant, because it may give us insight into how Zonaras envisaged his work being received.<sup>75</sup> When talking about the addressees of his account, Zonaras

<sup>70</sup> See pp. 10–12 and pp. 22–3 of this book.

<sup>71</sup> See p. 18 of this book.

<sup>72</sup> According to Fögen, Zonaras composed ‘fourteen highly rhetorical pages’: Fögen, ‘Nocturnal Pollution’, 267.

<sup>73</sup> *Epitome*, III, 765.5–6.

<sup>74</sup> *Epitome*, I, 12.3.

<sup>75</sup> For some observations on the performance of Byzantine texts, see P. Marciniak, ‘The Byzantine Performative Turn’, in *Within the Circle of Ancient Ideas and Virtues*, ed. by K. Twardowska et al. (Krakow, 2014), 423–30; E. Bourbouhakis, ‘Rhetoric and Performance in Byzantium’, in *The Byzantine*

makes use of the following expressions: 'οἱ ἐντευχόμενοι τῇ ἱστορίᾳ', 'οἱ ἐντευχόμενοι τῷ συγγράμματι', 'οἱ ἐπιόντες τὸ σύγγραμμα', and 'οἱ ἀναγιγνώσκοντες τὸ σύγγραμμα'.<sup>76</sup> These are technical terms which denote the readers of a book.<sup>77</sup> The chronicler anticipated the reception of the *Epitome* by an audience of private readers. Certainly, though, he would also expect that his work would be read aloud before an audience of listeners in the *theatra*. As will be shown in the last chapter, the chronicle very soon became known to the literary circles of the capital, and was used by authors who were near-contemporaries of Zonaras, namely Constantine Manasses and Michael Glykas.<sup>78</sup> The public reading of the text must have played a key role in its quick transmission. Zonaras' acquaintances to whom he sent drafts of his chronicle would read parts of the text to their own circle of friends. Likewise, the writer himself, when he occasionally left St Glykeria, could have attended the *theatra* and presented drafts of his work. Of course, such a long composition as the *Epitome* would have to be read aloud in sections. It is worth adding that the owner of the *Par. gr.* 1715 makes the following remark in his treatise about Zonaras: 'Indeed he cared for elegance and sweetness of diction in order not to overwhelm his listeners with a speech which would otherwise have been extremely harsh, dissonant and somewhat inflexible' ('[ἐδέησε] κάλλους δὲ καὶ γλυκύτητος ὅσον ἔμελλε μὴ διακορεῖς τοὺς ἀκούοντας διαθεῖναι τῷ πάνυ τραχεῖ καὶ δυσήχῳ τῆς ἐρμηνείας καὶ οἶον σκληρῷ').<sup>79</sup> Praising Zonaras' pleasant language, the writer of the treatise essentially confirms that the text was orally delivered to a listening audience. The final chapter includes a thorough investigation of the treatise contained in the *Par. gr.* 1715.<sup>80</sup>

To sum up, through an examination of the cultural and social system to which Zonaras belonged, it is clear that the chronicler was part of a network of intellectuals who provided him with reading material and to whom he distributed his own writings. One may surmise that his circle of friends consisted of those with whom he had become acquainted when he was still a layman and kept in touch by letter. This group also constituted the audience for whom Zonaras was originally writing. This audience would be able to read a text written in mildly archaizing Greek, as the *Epitome* is, and appreciate the chronicler's references to well-known Christian and pagan authors.

*World*, ed. by P. Stephenson (London, 2010), 175–87; Toth, 'Rhetorical Theatron', 441–4; A. Stone, 'Aurality in the Panegyrics of Eustathios of Thessalonike', in *Theatron*, ed. by Grünbart, 419–28; P. Marciniak, 'Byzantine Theatron – A Place of Performance?', in *Theatron*, ed. by Grünbart, 277–85.

<sup>76</sup> *Epitome*, I, 8.11–12, 9.9–10, 7.6–7 and II, 298.6, respectively.

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, the third meaning of the lemma 'ἐντυγχάνω' in the *LSJ*: 'of books, meet with; hence, read'.

<sup>78</sup> See pp. 125–130 of this book.

<sup>79</sup> *Commentary in the Par. gr. 1715*, 568–9. For the translation of the segment, see Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 114.

<sup>80</sup> See p. 154 of this book.

# Readers' Responses and the Reception of the *Epitome*

## 7.1 Immediate and Later Reception of the Chronicle by Byzantine Authors

We begin this discussion by exploring the immediate reception of the *Epitome* by members of the Constantinopolitan literary circles. By 'immediate', I mean the reception of the work by its audience until roughly the 1170s, namely about thirty years after its 'publication'. There are two testimonies which give us an idea of how approximate contemporaries of Zonaras approached and exploited the *Epitome*. These are the chronicles of Constantine Manasses and Michael Glykas.

It is hard to pinpoint exactly when Manasses lived and composed his *Chronike Synopsis* (henceforth: CS), a chronicle of 6620 fifteen-syllable verses which begins with the biblical Creation and continues up to the reign of Nikephoros Botaneiates.<sup>1</sup> The only evidence we have for the date when the CS was written comes from the work itself. First, an epigram preceding the text reveals that the author dedicated his chronicle to a prominent literary patroness of the twelfth century, the *sebastokratorissa* Irene, the sister-in-law of the emperor Manuel Komnenos.<sup>2</sup> Irene's date of death, approximately 1152/3, is the *terminus ante quem* of the work. Second, a few laudatory lines addressed to 'the greatest lord of the Ausones (Romans)' ('μέγιστον Αὔσονάνακτα') Manuel demonstrate conclusively that the text was completed after his ascent to the imperial throne in 1143.<sup>3</sup> The CS, therefore, can be dated to between 1143 and 1152.

<sup>1</sup> For information on the text, see Odysseas Lampsidis' extensive preface in his edition of Manasses' chronicle: Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, I, xi–clix. See also Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, 145–53; For information on both Manasses and the CS, see also the detailed introduction to the German translation of the chronicle: *Konstantinos Manasses Verschronik*, 4–9. Generally, for Manasses, see Nilsson, *Writer and Occasion*, 13–15; Treadgold, *Historians*, 399–403; Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom', 123–6; O. Lampsidis, 'Zur Biographie von Konstantinos Manasses und zu seiner *Chronike Synopsis*', *Byz*, 58 (1988), 97–111.

<sup>2</sup> For information about the *sebastokratorissa* Irene, see E. Jeffreys, 'The Sevastokratorissa Eirene as Patron', in *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. by L. Theis et al. (Cologne, 2014), 177–94; James of Kokkinobaphos (Jacob the Monk), *Iacobi Monachi epistulae*, ed. by E. and M. Jeffreys (Turnhout, 2009), xiv–xv, xxiv–xxxii; E. and M. Jeffreys, 'Who was Eirene the Sevastokratorissa?', *Byz*, 64 (1994), 40–68.

<sup>3</sup> Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, verses 2506–12.

The chronicle of Zonaras was one of the major sources employed by Manasses, even though he never mentions the name of his predecessor. This is not surprising given that, as a rule, Manasses avoids acknowledging his sources. The fact that the author makes use of a work which had only recently appeared may suggest that Zonaras' *Epitome* must have made an impression on him or, as Treadgold supposes, his patroness.<sup>4</sup> Treadgold assumes that Irene might have read Zonaras' account and commissioned Manasses to write a more succinct universal chronicle. It is striking, but not altogether unexpected, that a text which was replete with remarks that were highly critical of the first Komnenian emperor would circulate through the networks surrounding the *sebastokratorissa*, whose relationship with Manuel was extremely tense in the last decade of her life. Following the death of her husband, the *sebastokrator* Andronikos Komnenos in 1142, Irene fell out of favour with the emperor, which led to her imprisonment and banishment from the capital. Despite the antipathy his benefactor had towards Manuel, Manasses was cautious lest he too fell into disgrace in court circles and therefore spoke in positive terms about Manuel.<sup>5</sup> Omitting Zonaras' harsh remarks about the Komnenian system of government, he professes that the reason why he terminated his history with the deposition of Botaneiates is that the achievements of the Komnenoi were too glorious to be expressed in words.<sup>6</sup>

The *Epitome* was a very useful compendium for Manasses. Unlike Zonaras, who gradually developed the project of a world chronicle on the basis of the source material he had managed to acquire, Manasses had a large store of material readily available to him, and one which covered the entire period he intended to relate in his writing. He consults Zonaras for his presentation of the biblical, the Roman, and the Byzantine past, and traces of the *Epitome* are found in the CS from the start. More often than not, though, Zonaras' chronicle is not the principal source used by Manasses, who tends to use the *Epitome* in parallel with the text or texts on which he primarily bases his narrative.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Treadgold, *Historians*, 399.

<sup>5</sup> We know, for instance, of an encomiastic *ekphrasis* composed by Manasses for Manuel: I. Nilsson, 'Constantine Manasses, Odysseus, and the Cyclops. On Byzantine Appreciation of Pagan Art in the Twelfth Century', *Byzantinoslavica*, 69 (2011), 123–36, at 125. As Magdalino observes, ambitious writers of the time struggled to strike a balance between their obedience to their primary patron and their loyalty to the emperor, particularly in cases when the relationship of the patron himself with the emperor was turbulent. Manasses and the court poet Manganeios Prodromos are two characteristic examples of authors whose loyalties lie both with the *sebastokratorissa* Irene and Manuel Komnenos: Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 351–2.

<sup>6</sup> Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, verses 6609–20.

<sup>7</sup> The sources of the text are discussed by Lampsidis in the introduction to his edition: Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, I, lii–liv. See also: Konstantinos Manasses *Verschönerung*, 9–12; A. Rhoby, 'Quellenforschung am Beispiel der Chronik des Konstantinos Manasses', in *Textual Transmission in Byzantium: Between Textual Criticism and Quellenforschung*, ed. by J. Signes Codoñer and I. Pérez Martín (Turnhout, 2014), 391–415; Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 551–3; E.-S. Kiapidou, 'Ο λογοτέχνης Κωνσταντίνος Μανασσής συγγράφει Σύνοψη Χρονική. Οι πηγές του για την εξιστόρηση της πρωτοβυζαντινής περιόδου', in *Realia*, ed. by Kotzabassi and Mavromatis, 57–66.

A first observation to make about Manasses' method of work is that when drawing on the vocabulary of his fellow chronicler, he tries to fit Zonaras' phrasing into the rhythmic structure of his verses. Manasses' brief account of the legendary rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius is a case in point. To recount the history of the early Roman Empire, Manasses mainly follows the *Roman Antiquities* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but on reaching the story of Lucretia, he gives precedence to the *Epitome*. This is what Dionysius writes in his text: 'Sextus attempted to corrupt this woman, because she was the most beautiful and prudent of all Roman women' ('ταύτην τὴν γυναῖκα καλλίστην οὖσαν τῶν ἐν Ῥώμῃ γυναικῶν καὶ σωφρονεστάτην ἐπεχείρησεν ὁ Σέξτος διαφθεῖραι').<sup>8</sup> The corresponding extract in the *Epitome* is as follows:

Lucretia was daughter of Lucretius Spurius, a senator, and wife of Tarquinius Collatinus, a prominent man. She was renowned for her beauty and prudence. Sextus, the son of Tarquinius sought to dishonour this woman [...]

ἡ δὲ Λουκρητία θυγάτηρ μὲν ἦν Λουκρητίου Σπουρίου, ἀνδρὸς τῶν τῆς συγκλήτου ἑνός, γαμετὴ δὲ Κολλατίου Ταρκυνίου τῶν ἐπιφανῶν, ἐπὶ τε κάλλει καὶ σωφροσύνῃ τυγχάνουσα περιβόητος. ταύτην Σέξτος ὁ τοῦ Ταρκυνίου υἱὸς αἰσχύναι σπούδασμα ἔθετο [...]<sup>9</sup>

In the chronicle of Manasses, we read that: 'Since the child of Tarquinius committed a crime / and dishonoured the most prudent Lucretia, / wife of Collatinus, a most noble man [...]' ('ἐπεὶ δὲ παρηνόμησεν ὁ παῖς τοῦ Ταρκυνίου / καὶ Λουκρητίαν ἤσχυνε τὴν σωφρονικωτάτην, / τὴν Κολλατίου γαμετὴν ἀνδρὸς εὐγενεστάτου [...]').<sup>10</sup> The segment of the *Epitome* 'ταύτην Σέξτος ὁ τοῦ Ταρκυνίου υἱὸς αἰσχύναι σπούδασμα ἔθετο' provides Manasses with the inspiration for verses 1685–6 of his chronicle. He replaces the two-syllable word 'υἱὸς' with the one-syllable word 'παῖς' to form the second hemistich of the fifteen-syllable verse, which should consist of seven syllables. He prefers to employ a form of the verb 'αἰσχύνω', present in Zonaras' narrative, instead of a form of 'διαφθεῖρω', which is used by Dionysius. In verse 1687 he takes the phrase 'γαμετὴ δὲ Κολλατίου' almost verbatim from Zonaras' text, as he can easily adapt it to form the first eight-syllable hemistich of the political verse.

A second point to notice is that Zonaras' overall writing style was clearly too rigid for Manasses' taste. The author of the CS certainly wished to relate the history of Christianity and the Roman nation, but was equally, or even more, concerned with composing a flowery narrative and recounting good stories to

<sup>8</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Dionysii Halicarnasei antiquitates Romanae quae supersunt*, ed. by C. Jacoby, II (Leipzig, 1885; repr. Stuttgart, 1967), 108.8–10 (Book 4, chapter 64).

<sup>9</sup> *Epitome*, II, 41.5–9.

<sup>10</sup> Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, verses 1685–7.

please and entertain his audience.<sup>11</sup> As a rule, therefore, he selected short pieces of information from the *Epitome* and tried to enrich the text of his source with impressive literary motifs, such as fanciful metaphors and compound adjectives that he often coined himself. We can consider, for instance, how Manasses rewrites and expands the following sentence in which Zonaras talks about the library near the Chalkoprateia church in Constantinople. Zonaras writes: 'There was an imperial building in the so-called basilica very close to the Chalkoprateia, where many books of both secular, and very noble and holy wisdom were found' ('οἶκος ἦν ἐν τῇ καλουμένῃ Βασιλικῇ ἔγγιστα τῶν Χαλκοπρατίων βασιλείος, ἐν ᾧ καὶ βίβλοι τῆς τε θύραθεν σοφίας καὶ τῆς εὐγενεστέρας καὶ θειοτέρας πολλὰί ἐναπέκειντο').<sup>12</sup> In Manasses' chronicle, we read:

Close to the courtyard of Saint Sophia,  
an illustrious building was erected by the old emperors,  
one could say a pretty garden of book-bearing trees,  
a grove beautifully planted with all kinds of wisdom.

Τοῦ τεμενίσματος ἐγγὺς τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Σοφίας  
οἶκος λαμπρὸς δεδόμητο τοῖς πάλαι βασιλεῦσι,  
κῆπος, ἂν εἴποι τις, ἀβρὸς βιβλιοφόρων δένδρων,  
ἄλλος ἀγλαοφύτευτον παντοδαπῆς σοφίας.<sup>13</sup>

As can be seen in these extracts, Manasses composes his verses by using Zonaras' language as his primary material ('οἶκος [...] βασιλείος' > 'οἶκος [...] τοῖς πάλαι βασιλεῦσι', 'ἔγγιστα' > 'ἐγγὺς', 'σοφίας'), but modifies the austere narrative of his source to suit his own style. He therefore comes up with two well-turned similes, likening the library to a garden of 'book-bearing trees' and 'a grove, beautifully planted with all kinds of wisdom.' He also makes use of two striking adjectives, 'βιβλιοφόρων' and 'ἀγλαοφύτευτον'. The adjective 'ἀγλαοφύτευτον' was invented by Manasses himself and is a *hapax legomenon* in Greek literature, as a search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database shows. Although he makes use of Zonaras' text, in other words, Manasses seeks to produce a chronicle with higher literary pretensions than his predecessor's.

<sup>11</sup> The most prominent example of such a story is that of the Trojan War, to which he dedicates more than 360 verses: Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, verses 1108–470. Ingela Nilsson has thoroughly studied the literary qualities of Manasses' chronicle in a series of papers. For an examination of the literary qualities of Manasses' chronicle, see I. Nilsson and E. Nyström, 'To Compose, Read, and Use a Byzantine Text: Aspects of the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses', *BMGS*, 33 (2009), 42–60; I. Nilsson, 'Discovering Literariness in the Past: Literature vs. History in the *Synopsis Chronike* of Konstantinos Manasses', in *L'écriture de la mémoire*, ed. by Odorico, Agapitos, and Hinterberger, 15–31; D. R. Reinsch, 'Historia ancilla litterarum? Zum literarischen Geschmack in der Komnenenzeit: Das Beispiel der *Σύνοψις Χρονική* des Konstantinos Manasses', in *L'écriture de la mémoire*, ed. by Odorico, Agapitos, and Hinterberger, 81–94; I. Nilsson, 'Narrating Images in Byzantine Literature: The Ekphrasis of Konstantinos Manasses', *JÖB*, 55 (2005), 121–46.

<sup>12</sup> *Epitome*, III, 259.18–260.2.

<sup>13</sup> Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, verses 4191–4.



Glykas was active during the reign of Manuel Komnenos.<sup>14</sup> A former imperial secretary, he fell out of favour with the emperor, and was blinded and imprisoned in 1159.<sup>15</sup> It is generally agreed that the chronicle was penned some time after Glykas' release from prison in c.1164–1165.<sup>16</sup> The text extends to the death of Alexios Komnenos in 1118 and is divided by the writer into four sections: (a) the Creation; (b) Jewish history; (c) Roman history; and (d) Byzantine history. Two of the most notable features of the work are the attention Glykas pays to the biblical and Jewish past, as well as the avid interest he exhibits in the natural world.<sup>17</sup>

The writer relies on the *Epitome* mainly to supplement the works of George the Monk, John Skylitzes, and *Skylitzes Continuatus*.<sup>18</sup> He makes no use at all of Zonaras' extensive account of the early Roman Empire and Republican Rome since, following George the Monk, he starts the Roman section of his work with Julius Caesar.<sup>19</sup> He takes more material from the *Epitome* to record the history of Byzantium, particularly the events between the reign of Theophilos and the reign of Basil I,<sup>20</sup> as well as those during the age of Alexios Komnenos. The part of the chronicle dedicated to Alexios is the only one that depends solely on the *Epitome*.<sup>21</sup> On the whole, Glykas remains very close to Zonaras' content and wording. Although he greatly abridges the narrative of his source, he includes in his text pieces of information which present Alexios in a negative light. We read, for instance, that he would reduce the wealth of those belonging to the senatorial class, that he would come up with unjust ways to collect taxes, and that he had given the rulership of the Empire over to his mother. Like Zonaras, Glykas, too, appears displeased with the Komnenian style of government, and therefore does not hesitate to repeat some of Zonaras' critical remarks about the first emperor of the Komnenoi.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For general information on Glykas, see Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 585–624; W. Adler, 'Did the Biblical Patriarchs Practice Astrology? Michael Glykas and Manuel Komnenos I on Seth and Abraham', in *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, ed. by P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi (Geneva, 2006), 245–63 (for Glykas' intense interest in astrology); Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom', 131–6.

<sup>15</sup> O. Kresten, 'Zum Sturz des Theodoros Styppieotes', *JÖB*, 27 (1978), 49–103, at 66–77.

<sup>16</sup> According to Treadgold, the chronicle was presumably composed around 1170: Treadgold, *Historians*, 406.

<sup>17</sup> Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 381.

<sup>18</sup> The sources that were employed by Glykas for the early parts of his chronicle have been examined by Soutana Mauromati-Katsougiannopoulou in her book *Η χρονογραφία του Μιχαήλ Γλύκα και οι πηγές της: περίοδος 100 π.Χ.–118 μ.Χ.* (Thessalonike, 1984).

<sup>19</sup> Glykas, *Annales*, 379. Cf. George the Monk, *Chronicon*, I, 293.8.

<sup>20</sup> Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 598.

<sup>21</sup> Glykas' narrative of Alexios is found in *Annales*, 618–25. Karpozilos discusses this part of the text in *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 616–24.

<sup>22</sup> This, however, does not mean that he did not maintain his ties with members of the extended imperial family and the Constantinopolitan court. Indicative of this is a letter included in Glykas' *Theological Chapters*, an epistolary collection with which I deal immediately afterwards, and is addressed to Theodora, a niece and mistress of Manuel Komnenos. Glykas writes a letter to console Theodora, who had killed a woman out of envy. He brings up as examples past emperors who had been implicated in murders: Glykas, *Εἰς τὰς ἀπορίας*, II, 118–27.



It is worth mentioning that Glykas cites Zonaras by name four times in the course of his narrative. He tells us, for example, of the two different etymologies given by George the Monk and Zonaras for the word 'palace' ('παλάτιον').<sup>23</sup> The former explains that the term derives from 'Πάλας,' the name of a Persian eparch in Italy who built a magnificent house there.<sup>24</sup> The latter associates the word with the Palatine Hill, where, according to tradition, the shepherd Faustulus found Romulus and where later Julius Caesar established his residence.<sup>25</sup> Glykas repeats Zonaras' text almost verbatim, which indicates that he must have had access to a manuscript of the *Epitome*. Also, the writer remarks that the accounts of Skylitzes and Zonaras do not agree with each other on the identity of Leo VI's real father, with Zonaras arguing that Leo was actually the son of Michael III.<sup>26</sup> Although the *Epitome* had been 'published' only a short time before, it seems that Glykas expected the recipients of his work to be familiar with Zonaras and his chronicle, just as he expected them to know the work of Josephus and the older chronicles of George the Monk and John Skylitzes, which he repeatedly names as his sources, too.<sup>27</sup>

This observation leads us to include in this discussion the references we find to Zonaras' commentary on the holy canons in another work by Glykas, namely his *Theological Chapters*, a collection of ninety-five essays that interpret biblical passages or analyse canonical problems.<sup>28</sup> The majority of these are written in the form of letters and are intended as replies to questions posed to the author by various individuals. Focusing on the identity of Glykas' correspondents, Magdalino has observed that a great many of them were monks; only very few were laymen holding a high position in society.<sup>29</sup> Scholars tend to believe that these essays were produced after 1165, although it is difficult to determine whether their composition predates that of the chronicle.<sup>30</sup> Glykas quotes

<sup>23</sup> Glykas, *Annales*, 266.4–12.

<sup>24</sup> George the Monk, *Chronicon*, I, 21.2–6.

<sup>25</sup> *Epitome*, II, 411.12–17.

<sup>26</sup> Glykas, *Annales*, 551.16–552.4. Cf. *Epitome*, III, 414.16–415.5. Glykas further cites Zonaras in *Annales*, 530.16–531.2 and 546.7–10.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Glykas, *Annales*, 8.15–16, 198.1, 227.22, 238.4–5 (for Josephus); 221.7, 229.19–230.2, 243.1–4, 294.14–15 (for George the Monk); 531.20–1, 545.6–7, 547.12–13, 593.9–10 (for Skylitzes).

<sup>28</sup> For information about the text, see E.-S. Kiapidou, 'Writing Letters and Chronography in Parallel: The case of Michael Glykas' Letter Collection and *Biblos Chronike* in the 12th Century', *BZ*, 113 (2020), 837–52; E.-S. Kiapidou, 'Chapters, Epistolary Essays and Epistles. The Case of Michael Glykas' Collection of Ninety-Five Texts in the Twelfth-century', *Parekbolai*, 3 (2013), 45–64; Kiapidou, 'Epistolography'; Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 370–7.

<sup>29</sup> Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 372–6.

<sup>30</sup> See Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 382 (note 233), who argues that the *Theological Chapters* might have been compiled prior to the chronicle. It has also been suggested that the questions Glykas was asked to answer might have later inspired him to write a world history: Macrides and Magdalino, 'Fourth Kingdom', 131. Karpozilos, on the other hand, is sceptical about this and leans towards the possibility that the chronicle may have provided some material for the *Theological Chapters*: Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 601–3. Eirini-Sophia Kiapidou underlines that sometime after the original composition of the essays, Glykas must have edited and compiled them into a single corpus: Kiapidou, 'Epistolography', 181.

Zonaras' hermeneutical work on the canons in letter no. 90, which is addressed to a monk called Ioannikios the Grammarian.<sup>31</sup> The epistle focuses on an extract from Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which concerns a man who had an affair with his stepmother.<sup>32</sup> Paul urges the Corinthians 'to hand this kind of man over to the devil to destroy his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' ('*παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῆ ἔν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ*').<sup>33</sup> Glykas disagrees with those who interpret Paul's words to 'hand this man over to the devil' as meaning excommunication from the body of the Church.<sup>34</sup> Zonaras was the theologian who, as we read in the very first lines of the letter, interpreted Paul's extract in this way. Glykas continues by listing a series of arguments which indicate that Zonaras' opinion was incorrect. According to Glykas, Zonaras did not carefully consider the evidence found in the writings of other theologians, particularly those of Basil the Great, and was not particularly precise in the language he used.<sup>35</sup> The entire letter is essentially a rebuttal of Zonaras. Although Glykas disagrees with Zonaras' view, the fact that he produced an entire letter with the intention of refuting Zonaras' thesis indicates that he thought highly of him as a theologian. His characterization of Zonaras as a 'very learned' man ('*λογιώτατος*') towards the end of this epistle further attests to his admiration for Zonaras' theological knowledge. The impression is that Ioannikios, and generally the monastic audience to which this corpus of essays was directed, were expected to be aware of Zonaras and his canonical work. In contrast, Glykas obviously feels the need to introduce the pagan historical figures which he mentions, namely Pindar and Heraclitus.<sup>36</sup> It is reasonable to infer, therefore, that by the time Glykas compiled his *Theological Chapters*, Zonaras had already earned some fame as a commentator on the canons among men with theological and exegetical interests.

These considerations accord well with the high esteem in which Theodore Balsamon held Zonaras as a canonist. Along with Alexios Aristenos and Zonaras, Balsamon was the third great commentator on canon law to be active during the twelfth century.<sup>37</sup> His hermeneutical work on the canons must have been completed shortly after the death of Manuel Komnenos in 1180.<sup>38</sup> Unlike Zonaras,

<sup>31</sup> Glykas, *Eἰς τὰς ἀπορίας*, II, 405–9. There appears to have been a frequent correspondence between Glykas and the monk Ioannikios, as five essays contained in the *Theological Chapters* are addressed to Ioannikios: Kiapidou, 'Epistolography', 180 (note 49).

<sup>32</sup> 1 Corinthians 5.1–5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.5.

<sup>34</sup> Glykas, *Eἰς τὰς ἀπορίας*, II, 405.3–7.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.7–9.

<sup>36</sup> Glykas, *Eἰς τὰς ἀπορίας*, I, 240.6–7 (for Pindar); II, 416.8–9 (for Heraclitus). This has also been underlined by Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel*, 374.

<sup>37</sup> For information on Balsamon, see Troiannos, 'Canon Law', 180–3; H. Hunger, 'Kanonistenrhetorik in Bereich des Patriarchats am Beispiel des Theodoros Balsamon', in *Byzantium in the Twelfth-Century*, ed. by Oikonomides, 37–59; J. Meyendorff, 'Balsamon, the Empire and the Barbarians', in *Byzantium in the Twelfth-Century*, ed. by Oikonomides, 533–42; Magdalino, 'Constantinople and the "ξω Χῶραι"'.

<sup>38</sup> Troiannos, 'Canon Law', 180–3.

whose interpretation of the canons rests extensively on a theological basis, Balsamon's exegesis proceeds primarily from a legal point of view.<sup>39</sup> In spite of this, he consults the work of his predecessor, occasionally repeating and expounding Zonaras' comments.<sup>40</sup> Twice in his account Balsamon calls his predecessor 'extraordinary' ('ὑπερφυής', 'ὑπερφυέστατος'), showing his appreciation of Zonaras' legal erudition.<sup>41</sup> This reinforces the impression that no more than two decades after the 'publication' of his canonical work, Zonaras already stood out in the field of canonical legal literature.

The conclusion to draw on the basis of these observations is that Zonaras became known in a relatively short period of time on account of his broader scholarly activity. Both his chronicle and his exegesis of the canons attracted the attention fairly quickly of his close contemporaries. The *Epitome* was already being read aloud in the literary salons of the capital in the late 1140s or early 1150s, and must have been a success among the learned men of Manasses' circle. When Glykas composed his own works, a little more than two decades later, he evidently expected that his readers would be familiar with the two most extensive compositions in Zonaras' oeuvre.

At this point, I would like to note a paradox in the survival of manuscripts containing the *Epitome*. Although the use of the chronicle by Zonaras' near contemporaries Manasses and Glykas betrays its circulation during the twelfth century, the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Epitome*, the *Par. gr.* 1715, dates to 1289, more than a hundred years after the text's 'publication'. In contrast, for example, the widely copied chronicle by Manasses is preserved in many manuscripts which date to the first hundred years after the work's 'publication', with the prototypes of these dating to this period.<sup>42</sup> Might this 'delayed' transmission of the *Epitome* indicate that the chronicle was not initially popular? The evidence presented above suggests the opposite, particularly in terms of the work's circulation in Constantinopolitan circles. In addition, paradoxical occurrences in the circulation of literary texts in medieval times are common. Another peculiarity in the transmission of a Byzantine historical work concerns John Malalas' chronicle, for instance, which survives in a single defective manuscript dated to the eleventh or twelfth centuries.<sup>43</sup> Yet it is clear that earlier copies of the work did exist, as not only was Malalas employed by Byzantine authors such as Evagrius of Epiphaneia, John of Antioch, and Theophanes

<sup>39</sup> B. Stolte, 'The Past in Legal Argument in the Byzantine Canonists of the Twelfth Century', in *Byzantium in the Twelfth-Century*, ed. by Oikonomides, 199–210, at 209.

<sup>40</sup> Troiannos, 'Canon Law', 178. For Balsamon's knowledge and use of Zonaras, see Macrides, 'Nomos and Kanon'.

<sup>41</sup> Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα*, II, 49; IV, 76.

<sup>42</sup> See Lampsidis' observations in Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, I, xlv.

<sup>43</sup> This is codex *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 182. For information and a description of the state of the codex, see Jeffreys, 'Malalas in Greek', 245–7.

Confessor prior to the eleventh century,<sup>44</sup> but also his chronicle was translated into Latin in the seventh century and started being used by Syriac chroniclers in the eighth.<sup>45</sup> Striking peculiarities can also be seen in the survival of texts belonging to other genres, as is the case with Galen's *Therapeutics to Glaucon*, a much-copied and influential work. Galen's text (or fragments of it) is preserved in thirty manuscripts, the earliest of which date to the thirteenth century, with a few additional witnesses dated to the tenth.<sup>46</sup> Despite this late transmission of the *Therapeutics to Glaucon*, commentaries and summaries of the text were produced as early as the fifth century,<sup>47</sup> which proves that manuscripts of the work had been clearly circulating since much earlier. In the light of these remarks, therefore, the fact that the earliest surviving codex of the *Epitome* dates to the late thirteenth century is by no means an indicator of the work's popularity prior to that period.

The *Epitome* continued to be held in high regard by authors of universal chronicles in the following centuries, too. A chronicle which is known to have taken much material from the *Epitome* is that of Ephraim from Ainos. Roughly dated to the first or second decade of the fourteenth century, the work consists of 9588 dodecasyllable verses and is arranged by reign.<sup>48</sup> The first two sheets of the manuscript in which the text survives, the *Vat. gr.* 1003, have been lost. As a result, we do not know either the original title of the chronicle or its precise starting point.<sup>49</sup> In its present form, the text commences with Caligula and concludes with the reconquest of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261.<sup>50</sup> As a rule, the presentation of the Byzantine emperors (from Constantine the Great onwards) is more elaborate than that of the Roman emperors, to whom the author usually dedicates a terse paragraph each. Notable also is the intense focus of the narrative on each emperor's contribution to Christianity and the development of orthodox dogma.

<sup>44</sup> For details on the use of Malalas' chronicle by these authors, see Jeffreys, 'Malalas in Greek', 249–52, at 257–60.

<sup>45</sup> For the Latin translation of Malalas' chronicle, see J. Stevenson, 'Malalas in Latin', in *Studies*, ed. by Jeffreys, 287–99. For information on the use of Malalas' work by Syriac writers, see W. Witakowski, in *Studies*, ed. by Jeffreys, 299–310.

<sup>46</sup> Bouras-Vallianatos, 'Reading Galen', 183.

<sup>47</sup> I. Garofalo, 'Galen's Legacy in Alexandrian Texts Written in Greek, Latin and Arabic', in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Galen*, ed. by P. Bouras-Vallianatos and B. Zipser (Leiden, 2019), 62–85, at 62; Bouras-Vallianatos, 'Reading Galen', 188–94.

<sup>48</sup> For the dating of the text, see the introduction in Lampsidis' edition of the text: Ephraim, *Historia Chronica*, xvii. For further information on the chronicle, see Έφραίμ του Αινίου Χρονογραφία. Κείμενο, μετάφραση, σχόλια, trans. into Greek by O. Lampsidis, 2 vols (Athens, 1984); H. Hunger, *Literatur*, I, 478–80; O. Lampsidis, *Beiträge zum byzantinischen Chronisten Ephraem und seiner Chronik* (Athens, 1972). Ephraim (or a member of his circle) has been shown as the author of a series of epigrams, many of which exhibit striking parallels to his chronicle: J. Bértola, 'Ephraim of Ainos at Work: A Cycle of Epigrams in the Margins of Niketas Choniates', *BZ*, 114 (2021), 929–1000.

<sup>49</sup> The work is also preserved in the seventeenth-century *Vat. barb. gr.* 146; this, however, is a copy of the *Vat. gr.* 1003.

<sup>50</sup> According to Lampsidis, Ephraim must have begun his account with the reign of the emperor Tiberius: Ephraim, *Historia Chronica*, x. Hunger, however, is of the opinion that the text might have started with the age of Julius Caesar or Augustus: Hunger, *Literatur*, I, 478.

Ephraim owes much to Zonaras, with the *Epitome* being his principal authority for the period until the regime of Alexios Komnenos.<sup>51</sup> Unlike Manasses, whose writing style is particularly rhetorical, he is not interested in rendering the narrative of his source in a different, more flowery mode. The author remains faithful not only to the content but also to the phrasing of Zonaras' text. Depending on how easy it is to put the sentences of his source into verse, he even follows the syntactical structure of Zonaras' narrative. This is revealed, for instance, by a comparative reading of the two brief segments that follow. In the *Epitome*, we read: 'Since there were three emperors, namely Constantine himself, Licinius and Maxentius [...]' (Τριῶν δ' ὄντων τῶν βασιλέων, αὐτοῦ Κωνσταντίνου καὶ Λικιννίου καὶ Μαξεντίου [...]).<sup>52</sup> Ephraim writes: 'Since there were three emperors then, / he [Constantine], Maxentius and Licinius [...]' (Τριῶν δ' ὑπόντων αὐτοκρατόρων τότε, / τοῦτου Μαξεντίου τε καὶ Λικινίου [...]).<sup>53</sup> Here, Ephraim stays very close to both the wording and the syntax of the *Epitome*. For metrical reasons, though, he uses the two-syllable participle 'ὑπόντων', instead of 'ὄντων' found in Zonaras' text, replaces the noun 'βασιλέων' with 'αὐτοκρατόρων' and inserts the adverb 'τότε' to form his dodecasyllable verse.

In other instances, the writer sometimes paraphrases the *Epitome* by changing the order of the words, or seeks to find terms which are close synonyms of Zonaras' and fit the metre of his text. According to the *Epitome*, for example, 'Zeno came from the most shameful nation, that of the Isaurians, himself being most ugly in both his appearance and his soul [...]' (Ἐν δὲ ὁ Ζήνων ἐξ ἔθνους αἰσχίστου τοῦ τῶν Ἰσαύρων, αἰσχιστος καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τὴν μορφήν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν γεγρονώς [...]).<sup>54</sup> In the corresponding passage of his chronicle, Ephraim replaces the word 'ψυχὴν', present in the *Epitome*, with 'καρδίαν', a metrically convenient synonym: 'Zeno came from the Isaurians, as I said, / a most ugly man in both body and heart' (Ζήνων δ' ὑπήρχεν ἐξ Ἰσαύρων, ὡς ἔφη, / αἰσχιστος ἀνὴρ καὶ δέμας καὶ καρδίαν).<sup>55</sup> Ephraim treats the other major sources of his chronicle—the historical works of Niketas Choniates and George Akropolites—in much the same way.

Ephraim displays an avid interest in the portrayals of emperors he finds in his sources. He usually inserts a short description of each emperor at the beginning of the section dedicated to his reign. For his presentation of Alexios Komnenos, he draws on the last part of Zonaras' account of the emperor.<sup>56</sup> One can observe that Ephraim eliminates all elements of Zonaras' outspoken critique of Alexios. He leaves out the details that are unfavourable to the Komnenian emperor and thus conveys a much more positive image of him. Alexios is depicted as a

<sup>51</sup> In the introduction of his edition, Lampsidis discusses the sources on which Ephraim was based for the composition of his chronicle: Ephraim, *Historia Chronica*, xl–xlii.

<sup>52</sup> *Epitome*, III, 2.9–10.

<sup>53</sup> Ephraim, *Historia Chronica*, verses 308–9.

<sup>54</sup> *Epitome*, III, 128.5–6.

<sup>55</sup> Ephraim, *Historia Chronica*, verses 966–7.

<sup>56</sup> Ephraim's account of Alexios Komnenos is found in *Historia Chronica*, verses 3482–708.

moderate, accessible ruler, one who would not indulge in luxuries and would pay honour to virtuous men.<sup>57</sup>

The *Epitome* also furnished much material for a contemporary of Ephraim, Constantine Akropolites (d. c.1324), whose chronicle survives in the fourteenth-century codex *Vind. hist. gr.* 99.<sup>58</sup> Constantine, the son of the historian George Akropolites, was a prolific writer who gained much fame, particularly for his *metaphrases* of saints' lives.<sup>59</sup> His chronicle is contained in ff. 15<sup>r</sup>–35<sup>r</sup> of the manuscript and is entitled *Epitome of the rulership of the Roman state, and where the Romans came from and why they were called Romans* (ἐπιτομή ἀρχῆς τῆς ῥωμαίων ἐπικρατείας, καὶ τίνος κατάγονται καὶ πῶς ῥωμαῖοι ἐκλήθησαν). Alfred Heinrich was the first to identify Constantine as the author of this text in the late 1800s, based on the inscription found above the title of the text: 'Of Akropolites the Master and Grand Logothete' (τοῦ ἀκροπολίτου κυροῦ καὶ μεγάλου λογοθέτου).<sup>60</sup> Indeed, during the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos (r. 1282–1328), Constantine rose first to the office of the Logothete *tu genikou*, and then, in 1294, to that of the Grand Logothete. He remained Grand Logothete to at least 1321. According to August Heisenberg, the work cannot have been penned by George Akropolites, who also occupied that office. As Heinrich noted, George explicitly stated in his *History* that he had no interest in composing a world chronicle, since a number of authors had already carried out such a project.<sup>61</sup> The work starts with the arrival of Aeneas in Italy and ends in the years 1323 or 1341.

Only five passages of the chronicle have been edited.<sup>62</sup> So far as one can tell from these extracts, Constantine's narrative is extremely condensed and, in Donald Nicol's words, 'pedantic and unliterary'.<sup>63</sup> Herbert Hunger has stressed that the writer based a large portion of his account on the historical works of Zonaras and Manasses.<sup>64</sup> A comparative reading of the published extracts from Constantine's chronicle and the corresponding sections of Zonaras makes it apparent that the *Epitome* is the chief, if not the sole, source exploited by Constantine for his presentation of Vespasian-Titus-Domitian, Constantine IV

<sup>57</sup> Ephraim, *Historia Chronica*, verses 3500–2. Cf. *Epitome*, III, 765.11–17.

<sup>58</sup> Hunger, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften*, 107.

<sup>59</sup> For some biographical information about Constantine Akropolites, see K. Konstantinidis, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Nicosia, 1982), 38–42, 100–1. Donald Nicol provides a list of all works, both edited and unedited until that point, composed by Akropolites: Nicol, 'Constantine Akropolites'. For Akropolites' texts that were edited after the publication of Nicol's article, see Talbot, 'Hagiography', 177–9, in footnote 14 (with bibliography).

<sup>60</sup> See Akropolites, *Chronicle*, 10–11. It should also be mentioned that Heinrich believes that the part of the manuscript containing Constantine's chronicle was copied in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. Detailed information on Akropolites' chronicle and *Vind. hist. gr.* 99 can be found in Tocci, 'Chronik'. See also Neville, *Guide*, 252–3.

<sup>61</sup> George Akropolites, *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, ed. by A. Heisenberg (Leipzig, 1903), II, xxiv.

<sup>62</sup> Akropolites, *Chronicle*, 11–15. A new edition of the text is currently being prepared by R. Tocci for the series *Byzantinisches Archiv*.

<sup>63</sup> Nicol, 'Constantine Akropolites', 256.

<sup>64</sup> Hunger, *Literatur*, I, 477.

Pogonatos, John Tzimiskes-Basil II-Constantine VIII-Romanos III Argyros, and Romanos IV Diogenes-Michael VII Doukas. On this evidence, it is clear that the author relied on Zonaras for an extensive part of his narrative, at least from the period of the Principate to the late eleventh century.<sup>65</sup> One may reasonably presume that he continued his use of the *Epitome* until the reign of Alexios Komnenos.

Constantine's working method is unimpressive. He follows Zonaras' text verbatim or paraphrases it only slightly. He collects and brings together pieces of information that are placed in different sections of his source without adding anything of his own. The author's close adherence to Zonaras' narrative is clearly illustrated, for example, in the chapter which focuses on Tzimiskes. First, let us look at a part of what Zonaras tells us of Tzimiskes.

When Tzimiskes rose to the imperial office, he made Romanos' sons partners in leadership, although they were still children [...] When these events happened, Tzimiskes was allowed entrance to the church and received the crown in the feast of the birth of our Saviour and God, and he banished Theophano to Prokonnesos.

ὁ δὲ Τζιμισκῆς τῆς βασιλείας γενόμενος ἐγκρατῆς καὶ τοὺς τοῦ Ῥωμανοῦ παῖδας κοινωνοὺς πεποιήτο τῆς ἀρχῆς παῖδας ἔτι τυγχάνοντας [...] Τούτων δὲ γενομένων, κατὰ τὴν γενέθλιον τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν καὶ θεοῦ ἑορτὴν ἅμα τε τὴν εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐπιτρέπεται εἶσοδον καὶ ἅμα τῷ διαδήματι στέφεται, τὴν δὲ Θεοφανὼν εἰς Προκόννησον περιώρισεν.<sup>66</sup>

Constantine introduces his chapter on the emperor by virtually copying certain segments of his source and leaving out details inessential to his account: 'When Tzimiskes rose to the imperial office, he made Romanos' sons partners in leadership and banished Theophano to Prokonnesos' ('ὁ δὲ Τζιμισκῆς τῆς βασιλείας γενόμενος ἐγκρατῆς καὶ τοὺς [τοῦ Ῥωμανοῦ] παῖδας κοινωνοὺς πεποιήται τῆς ἀρχῆς, τὴν δὲ Θεοφανὼν εἰς Προικόν[ννησον π]ερίωρισε').<sup>67</sup> Assuming that Constantine uses the rest of his reading in such a way, his chronicle is of little historical or literary value.

Overall, with the exception of Manasses, these chroniclers were notably reluctant to imitate or exploit Zonaras' account creatively. They would produce an abbreviated version of the *Epitome*, mainly by paraphrasing their source or even citing verbatim passages taken from Zonaras. However, the fact itself that

<sup>65</sup> The strong dependence of Akropolites' chronicle is also emphasized in Tocci, 'Chronik', 200–1. Interestingly, Tocci identifies another source related to the *Epitome* that was used by Akropolites for this part of his chronicle. Akropolites incorporated into his text the descriptive subtitles that appear in the margins of a manuscript of the *Epitome*, the thirteenth-century *Monac. gr.* 324 (or an earlier copy of this manuscript, or later one completed prior to Akropolites' chronicle): Tocci, 'Chronik', 203–4.

<sup>66</sup> *Epitome*, III, 519.11–12–520.1, 521.8–12.

<sup>67</sup> Akropolites, *Chronicle*, 13, *va*. 1–2.



Manasses, Glykas, Ephraim, and Constantine Akropolites all inserted a good deal of material from Zonaras' chronicle into their works indicates how reliable they regarded the *Epitome* as a historical source. It also highlights that the language of the text was accessible and flexible, which helped later writers to pattern their own accounts on Zonaras'.

A text that clearly stands apart from all these in terms of the type of material it draws on the *Epitome* is the treatise conventionally entitled by its editor, Jean-Paul Migne, *De Schismate Vitando*.<sup>68</sup> The work was written in the late thirteenth century by a monk named Methodios and records the history of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, extending to the early thirteenth century. In his treatise, Methodios turns against Arsenite churchmen who, he says, cause conflicts among Christians and divide the body of the Church. Introducing his text, he mentions that it is 'a compilation of various short books' (*συλλογή ἐκ διαφόρων συνοπτικῶν βιβλίων*). He cites Zonaras by name when he relates the appointment of Proklos as patriarch of Constantinople in 434.<sup>69</sup>

Similar in character is a short ecclesiastical chronicle contained in the *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25, a manuscript dated to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.<sup>70</sup> Covering ff. 233<sup>r</sup>–242<sup>v</sup> of the codex, this virtually unknown chronicle records the succession of patriarchs of Constantinople from the late fourth to the late twelfth centuries. The narrative is extremely succinct, giving only the names of patriarchs and a few pieces of information about each. The anonymous writer of the work reveals at the end of his text that he 'would move around here and there on account of Church scandals' (*διὰ τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας σκάνδαλα ἔνθεν κακεῖθεν περιφερόμενος*),<sup>71</sup> from which one can infer that he had apparently an ecclesiastical office. He directs his chronicle at a person who must also have been a churchman or a monk, as he addresses to him as 'Your Reverence' (*τῇ εὐλαβείᾳ σου*).<sup>72</sup> Turning to his recipient, he concludes his narrative: '[...] and these which I am sending you I read them some time in the past, and therefore I forgot a great deal of them. But you, in order to derive wisdom from these, look for the relevant passages and what follows after (them). For it is said "give a wise man the occasion (to do something) and he will be wiser"' (*[...] καὶ αὐτὰ γὰρ ἄπερ σοι πέπομφα πάλαι ἤμην ἀναγνοὺς, τὰ πλείω δὲ ἀπεβάλετό μου ἢ διάνοια. σὺ δ' ἐκ τούτων ἵνα ἄγης σοφώτατα, ἐπιλόγισαι τὰ συγγενῆ καὶ ἀκόλουθα. "δίδου", γὰρ φησι, "σοφῶ ἀφορμὴν καὶ σοφώτερος ἔσται"*).<sup>73</sup> The author writes from memory; he consulted

<sup>68</sup> Methodios, *De Schismate Vitando*. See also Beck, *Kirche*, 687.

<sup>69</sup> Methodios, *De Schismate Vitando*, 781. At this point, one reads: 'as Zonaras recounts in his chronicle' (*ὡς ὁ Ζωναράς ἱστορεῖ ἐν τῷ χρονικῷ αὐτοῦ*).

<sup>70</sup> For a description of the codex, see Coxe, *Catalogi codicum*, I, 32–6, and particularly at 33–4 for the chronicle. See also Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta', 250; Büttner-Wobst, 'Textgeschichte', 242.

<sup>71</sup> See *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25, f. 242<sup>v</sup>, lines 24–5; Coxe, *Catalogi codicum*, I, 34.

<sup>72</sup> See *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25, f. 242<sup>v</sup>, line 23; Coxe, *Catalogi codicum*, I, 34.

<sup>73</sup> See *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25, f. 242<sup>v</sup>, lines 25–8. The transcription of this passage is mine. Coxe read the words 'σὺ δ' as 'οἶδ', in which case, however, the text does not make sense. The quotation of the



the works on which he based his presentation of patriarchal history long before and cannot recall many details given there. For this reason, he advises his addressee to search for the sources he used and consider material he has not included. The *Epitome* was one of these sources.

The writer relies heavily on Methodios' *De Schismate Vitando*, through which he employed the *Epitome* as well. His reference to Zonaras concerning the accession of Proklos to the patriarchal throne is probably drawn from Methodios. Slightly paraphrasing Methodios' acknowledgement of his source, the author says that 'these events are recounted in the chronicle of the most wise Zonaras' ('ταῦτά δε μὲν ἱστοροῦνται ἐν τῇ χρονικῇ βίβλῳ τοῦ σοφωτάτου Ζωναρά').<sup>74</sup> But the anonymous chronicler makes two more references to the *Epitome* which cannot be found in Methodios' treatise. Thus, one can deduce that the author must have made direct use of the chronicle, too. He repeats the appreciative characterization of Zonaras as a very wise man when he discusses the quarrel between Ignatios and Photios; there, we are told that this information is present 'in the chronicle of the monk John, most wise Zonaras' ('ἐν τῇ χρονικῇ βίβλῳ Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ τοῦ σοφωτάτου Ζωναρά').<sup>75</sup> It is clear that the writer greatly admired the *Epitome*, not only as a source of information about ecclesiastical affairs but also as the intellectual product of a prudent man. For him, Zonaras' chronicle was a work of an edifying nature which would add wisdom to his own.

Another text that is pertinent to this discussion is a poem dedicated to a notable event in early Christian history, the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in AD 70. The poem, composed in iambic trimetre, was written in the early fourteenth century by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, a priest in Hagia Sophia and a prolific author.<sup>76</sup> Nikephoros himself claims that his poem derives material from Josephus, indicating that his source of information was the *JW*.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, in the text we can find echoes of the most memorable episodes recounted in the *JW*, such as the *teknophagia* of Mary (a Jewish woman who ate her own child) and the

last line is taken from Proverbs 9.9. It is worth drawing attention to the use of the term 'ἀφορμὴ' in this segment. In the context of the Bible, the word means an 'occasion for an act, a source of inspiration': T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain, 2009), 109. I adopt this interpretation of the word since here we have to do with a standard proverbial phrase. It is likely, however, that the anonymous author makes use of this quotation because in Byzantine works of a historical character the term 'ἀφορμὴ' frequently has a technical meaning, that of 'historical material'. See, for example, Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 4.2. The writer may be indirectly inviting his recipient to use these texts as sources for the composition of his own historical work.

<sup>74</sup> See *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25, f. 234<sup>r</sup>, lines 1–2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 239<sup>r</sup>, line 18. The second reference to the *Epitome* which does not appear in Methodios is included in f. 240<sup>r</sup>, line 12.

<sup>76</sup> For information on Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, see A. Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί και Χρονογράφοι. Τόμος Δ' (13ος–15ος αι.)* (Athens, 2015), 99–119. A survey of his oeuvre can be found in Beck, *Kirche*, 705–6. A new edition of this poem is currently in preparation by Professor Albrecht Berger.

<sup>77</sup> Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *De Excidio*, 601–2 (title in the Greek text).

scene of the Jews who swallowed their gold during the sack of Jerusalem.<sup>78</sup> In the last eight verses of his poem, though, Nikephoros clearly draws on Zonaras' chronicle, using pieces of information from the paragraph which serves as a conclusion to the Jewish section of the *Epitome*.<sup>79</sup> He summarizes and versifies Zonaras' statements that 'the tribulations of Judea' (τῆς Ἰουδαίας πάθη) end at this point and that the Jews revolted again during the reign of Hadrian, but were once again defeated.<sup>80</sup> It is striking that he employs much of Zonaras' vocabulary (e.g. πάθη, Τὴν ἐσχάτην ἄλωσιν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων / Ὑποστάσις, φθαρεισῶν). The author apparently understood the function of this paragraph as a conclusion to Zonaras' presentation of the early Christian past and made use of it to finish his own composition about the destruction of Jerusalem.

Taken in conjunction, these three texts, one penned by a monk and two by churchmen, confirm the suggestion put forward in the previous chapter that members of monastic and ecclesiastical circles with a good level of education would have been able to read and exploit the *Epitome*.<sup>81</sup> Also, as I pointed out in the third chapter, in his proem Zonaras presents the *Epitome* as a work of use to readers looking for information about religious affairs, although the text proper pays greater attention to the history of the Byzantine state rather than the history of the Church.<sup>82</sup> This is indeed the case. Unlike the writers discussed earlier, who took an interest in the *Epitome* as a compendium of Jewish and Roman imperial history, Methodios, the anonymous chronicler in the *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25 and Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos employed Zonaras' text solely to derive material about the Church or Christianity.

## 7.2 The Evidence of the Manuscript Transmission

A practical way to widen the enquiry into the reception of the chronicle in later times is to examine the manuscript transmission of the *Epitome*. From the great bulk of manuscripts in which the work or parts of it survive, I have closely looked at those which are dateable to the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. In particular, I have studied forty-three manuscripts in terms of (a) the number of manuscripts that contain the entire *Epitome* or only a certain section of it, and (b) the number of manuscripts that transmit Zonaras' chronicle alone or along with other texts. By examining (a), one gains a clear sense of what parts of the chronicle fascinated readers in general. For (b), it is crucial to consider not so much the manuscripts that preserve the *Epitome* exclusively as those that contain other

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 603 and 602 respectively.

<sup>79</sup> For information on the concluding paragraph of the Jewish section, see p. 32 of this book.

<sup>80</sup> Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *De Excidio*, 606.

<sup>81</sup> See p. 122 of this book.

<sup>82</sup> See pages p. 31 and p. 65 of this book.

works as well. The textual context of these codices can offer significant indications about the way in which audiences viewed the chronicle.

The forty-three manuscripts that have been taken into account in this investigation are listed in Table 7.1. This catalogue is arranged according to the part of the chronicle that each manuscript transmits. In their present state, manuscripts numbered from nos. 16 to 20 are mutilated, with leaves missing from either the beginning or the end of the codices. As has been shown by Pietro Leone and Boissevain, however, they must originally have preserved the whole work.<sup>83</sup> The same is true for nos. 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 33, and 41; they currently have varying degrees of damage, but must at one time have transmitted longer parts of the *Epitome*, those indicated in the corresponding sections of Table 7. 2.<sup>84</sup> I have added an asterisk to nos. 30, 31, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, and 43, because they either start or stop at the 'middle' of a book. This, however, is a deliberate choice on the part of their scribes, not a result of the mutilated state of the codices.<sup>85</sup>

Table 7.1 shows the manuscripts that have been studied for this investigation.

Table 7.2 shows how many of these codices contained or must have contained the entire chronicle, and how many other parts of the text.

A comparison of the number of manuscripts that preserve the whole chronicle with those that transmit shorter sections of it is given in Figure 7.1.

What strikes us here is that almost half of the manuscripts studied transmit Zonaras' entire text. This is an impressive figure, especially if one considers the gigantic length of the *Epitome* and the consequent cost of producing these manuscripts. It is remarkable that most patrons were keen on learning about the wide range of subjects covered by the chronicler. As they were interested equally in Jewish, Roman, and Byzantine history, they would ask for the entire work to be

<sup>83</sup> Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta', 235–7; Boissevain, 'Zur handschriftlichen Überlieferung', 250–1 (for no. 19).

<sup>84</sup> Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta', 239–41, 244, 248; Boissevain, 'Zur handschriftlichen Überlieferung', 256 (for nos. 24, 26, 27), 257 (for no. 41) and 271 (footnote 1, for no. 23).

<sup>85</sup> No. 30 commences with Zonaras' narrative of Pompey (Book 10, chapter 3): Coxe, *Catalogi codicum*, I, 453. No. 31 starts from Cleopatra (Book 10, chapter 30) and ends with the first years of Alexios Komnenos' reign (Book 18, chapter 25): see V. Puntoni, *Indice dei codici greci della biblioteca Estense di Modena* (Florence, 1896), 461–3. Codex 35 extends to the appearance of Arius (Book 13, chapter 4) and codex 36 up to the death of Michael II the Stammerer (Book 15, chapter 25): Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta', 243–5; Büttner-Wobst, 'Textgeschichte', 240 (for no. 35). No. 37 starts with the ascension of Diocletian to the Roman throne (Book 12, chapter 31): A. Turyn, *Codices graeci Vaticani: saeculis XIII et XIV scripti annorumque notis instructi* (Vatican, 1964), 131. Codex 38 contains an abridged version of Zonaras' narrative from the succession of Constantius I by his son Constantine (Book 12, chapter 30) to the end of the chronicle: C. Stornajolo, *Codices urbinates graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae* (Rome, 1895), 139–47. Codex 39 preserves the part which starts with Constantine's reign as sole emperor and ends shortly after the accession of Arkadios and Honorius to the thrones of the Eastern and Western Roman Empire, respectively (Book 13, chapter 12): Mioni, *Thesaurus Antiquus*, 396–8. No. 42 transmits the text from the rise of Isaac Komnenos to the imperial office (Book 18, chapter 4) almost to the end: Devreese, *Les fonds coislin*, 126–7. Codex 43 preserves a long part of the chronicle, that from the reign of Theodora as sole empress (Book 17, chapter 28) to the end of the work: V. Puntoni, *Indicis codicum graecorum Bononiensium ab Al. Oliverio compositi supplementum, Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, IV (1896), 370–3.

**Table 7.1** The manuscripts

1. <i>Par. gr.</i> 1715 (dated to 1289)	24. <i>Vat. gr.</i> 982 (13th cent.)
2. <i>Par. gr.</i> 1714 (13th cent.)	25. <i>Par. gr.</i> 1768 (14th cent.)
3. <i>Monac. gr.</i> 324 (late 13th cent.–late 14th cent.)	26. <i>Ambros. gr.</i> 691 = Q 92 (14th cent.)
4. <i>Vat. gr.</i> 135 (13th cent.)	27. <i>Monac. gr.</i> 325 (14th cent.)
5. <i>Vat. gr.</i> 136 (13th cent.)	28. <i>Patm.</i> 298 (14th cent.)
6. <i>Vat. pal. gr.</i> 271 (13th–14th cent.)	29. <i>Vat. gr.</i> 981 (14th cent.)
7. <i>Laur. plut. gr.</i> 70.4 (13th–14th cent.)	30. <i>Oxon. Crom. gr.</i> 24 (14th cent.)*
8. <i>Scor. gr.</i> 165 (14th cent.)	31. <i>Mut. gr.</i> 122 (14th–15th cent.)*
9. <i>Mut. gr.</i> 177 (14th cent.)	32. <i>Par. coisl. gr.</i> 137 (14th–15th cent.)
10. <i>Marc. gr.</i> 400 (14th cent.)	33. <i>Alex. bibl. patr.</i> 135 (15th cent.)
11. <i>Vind. hist. gr.</i> 16 (14th cent.)	34. <i>Vind. hist. gr.</i> 43 (14th–15th cent.)
12. <i>Lond. BL, Add.</i> 28828 (14th cent.)	35. <i>Vat. gr.</i> 1199 (15th cent.)*
13. <i>Marc. gr.</i> 399 (15th cent.)	36. <i>Taur. gr.</i> 220 (13th–14th cent.)*
14. <i>Ambros. gr.</i> 411 = G 73 sup. (15th cent.)	37. <i>Vat. gr.</i> 980 (14th cent.)*
15. <i>Par. gr.</i> 1716 (15th cent.)	38. <i>Vat. urb. gr.</i> 95 (13th–15th cent.)*
16. <i>Scor. gr.</i> 296 (13th cent.)	39. <i>Marc. gr.</i> 523 (15th cent.)*
17. <i>Vat. gr.</i> 1623 (13th cent.)	40. <i>Marc. gr.</i> VII 13 (14th cent.)
18. <i>Const. vet. ser. gr.</i> 50 (13–14th cent.)	41. <i>Vind. hist. gr.</i> 68 (14th cent.)
19. <i>Ambros. gr.</i> 912 = C 279 (14th cent.)	42. <i>Par. coisl. gr.</i> 135 (13th–14th cent.)*
20. <i>20. Balt. gr.</i> 16 (15th cent.)	43. <i>Bon. bibl. univ. gr.</i> 2412. (13th–14th cent.)*
21. <i>Par. gr.</i> 1717 (13th–14th cent.)	
22. <i>Marc. gr.</i> 401 (13th cent.)	
23. <i>Athen. gr.</i> 1069 (15th cent.)	

**Table 7.2** The contents of the manuscripts

Books of the <i>Epitome</i>	Number of manuscripts
1. The entire chronicle	20 (nos. 1–20)
2. Books 1–9 (entire first volume)	1 (no. 22)
3. Books 1–12	2 (nos. 21, 23)
4. Books 10–18 (entire second volume)	9 (nos. 24–29, 32–34)
5. Books 10–18	2 (nos. 30, 31)
6. Books 10–13	1 (no. 35)
7. Books 10–15	1 (no. 36)
8. Books 12–18	2 (nos. 37, 38)
9. Book 13	1 (no. 39)
10. Books 13–18	2 (nos. 40, 41)
11. Books 17–18	1 (no. 43)
12. Book 18	1 (no. 42)

reproduced. These figures, furthermore, offer evidence concerning the circulation of the chronicle. They indicate that, at least from the thirteenth century onwards, the two volumes of the *Epitome* circulated independently of each other. Clearly, though, the second volume was in considerably greater demand than the first, which seems to have been much less popular.

Examining only the twenty-three codices that transmit shorter sections of the *Epitome*, one can identify certain literary trends among the patrons. Seventeen

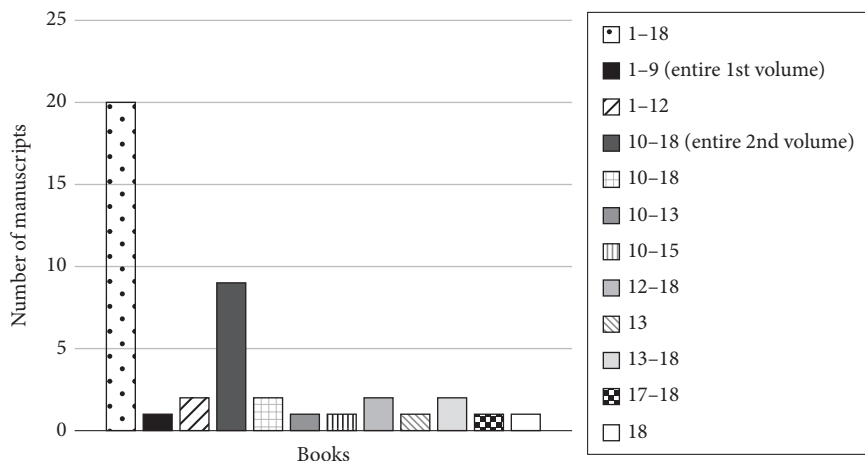


Figure 7.1 The number of manuscripts per books

manuscripts (nos. 21, 23–38) include parts of the chronicle dedicated to the early imperial history of Rome, namely from the age of Julius Caesar to the accession of Constantine the Great to the throne as sole emperor (Books 10–12). There are twenty codices (nos. 24–43) which preserve parts of the work from the reign of Constantine as sole emperor onwards (from Book 13 to the end of the text). Taken together, these two pieces of evidence reflect a clear preference among these patrons for the imperial history of the Empire. However, there was apparently greater enthusiasm for the Empire's more recent past, the period from the age of Constantine onwards. In other words, most patrons who did not wish to acquire the entire chronicle were interested in Zonaras as a source of information for Byzantine history. The patrons of only three manuscripts (nos. 21–23) displayed an interest specifically in the early history of Christianity, the first kings of Rome, and Republican Rome.

Let us now turn our attention to the number of codices in which the *Epitome* is transmitted alone or along with other texts. The overwhelming majority of manuscripts listed above—thirty out of the forty-three—contain Zonaras' chronicle exclusively or shorter sections of it. These are nos. 1–11, 13, 15–16, 18, 20–28, 30, and 33–37. One reason why most codices transmit the *Epitome* alone may be that the manuscripts which preserved the whole work, as extensive as it is, and even those that preserved only one of the two volumes, were already bulky enough. In any case, the fact that most patrons commissioned codices containing the *Epitome* alone implies that they appreciated and read Zonaras' text for its own sake, instead of including and using it in a manuscript of wider scope.

This is certainly true for some of the codices in which the chronicle survives along with other compositions. There are nine manuscripts that are essentially

'historical' (nos. 12, 14, 17, 19, 29, 32, and 40–42) in that they transmit mainly historical accounts. The histories of Niketas Choniates and George Akropolites are the works which usually appear along with the *Epitome*. In nos. 17, 29, 32, and 40, Choniates' text is presented right after Zonaras' chronicle and is followed by Akropolites' and Nikephoros Gregoras' histories in nos. 29 and 32, respectively.<sup>86</sup> All four codices begin with Genesis, the starting point of the *Epitome*. Manuscripts 17 and 40 go as far as 1206, when Choniates finishes his account, manuscript 29 up to 1261, the point where Akropolites' work comes to an end, and manuscript 32 up to 1351, when the eleventh book of Gregoras' *Roman History* stops. It is evident that here the *Epitome* is being exploited as part of a larger project. Selecting and putting these texts into a chronological sequence, the owners of the manuscripts seemed to be aiming to create a world history for themselves.<sup>87</sup>

The production of a historical handbook must also have been the purpose of manuscripts 12, 14, and 41, where only the histories of Zonaras and Akropolites are included.<sup>88</sup> Of course, with the absence of Choniates' work, there is a clear break in the timeline between 1118 and 1204. That manuscript 29 transmits the *Alexiad*, in addition to Zonaras, Choniates, and Akropolites, points to the strong preference of its owner for historical writings.<sup>89</sup> The same is probably true for the commissioner of codex 19, who requested, along with the *Epitome*, pieces from Skylitzes' *Synopsis* and *Skylitzes Continuatus*.<sup>90</sup> Manuscript 42 preserves, aside from Kedrenos, the part of Zonaras' chronicle that covers the eleventh century, which may indicate that its owner had a special interest in this period.<sup>91</sup>

An important conclusion that emerges from the observation of these historical manuscripts is that Zonaras was apparently perceived by their owners as the

<sup>86</sup> For no. 17, see C. Giannelli, *Codices vaticani graeci: codices 1485–1683* (Vatican, 1950), 291–3; Choniates, *Historia*, xxvii–xxviii. For no. 29, see R. Devreesse, *Le fonds grec de la bibliothèque vaticane des origines à Paul V* (Vatican, 1956), 420, 452; Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, I, 15\*–17\*. The first five folios, which include excerpts of the work *On the Peoples of India and the Brachmans*, written by the historian Palladius of Helenopolis, are not original to the manuscript: Choniates, *Historia*, xxxvii–xxxviii. For no. 32, see Devreesse, *Les fonds coislin*, 128–9; Choniates, *Historia*, xlv–xlvi. For no. 40, see E. Mioni, *Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum codices graeci manuscripti. Volumen II: codices qui in sextam, septimam atque octavam classem includuntur continens* (Rome, 1960), 28–9; Choniates, *Historia*, xxxviii–xxxix.

<sup>87</sup> These codices may be considered the earliest precursors of the printed editions of the *Corpus Historiae Byzantinae*, a collective corpus which comprised the historical works of Zonaras, Choniates, Gregoras, and Laonikos Chalkokondyles, all popular in Early Modern Europe: G. Della Rocca de Candal, 'Bibliographia Historica Byzantina: A Historical and Bibliographical Description of the Early Editions of the *Corpus Historiae Byzantinae* (1556–1645)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2016).

<sup>88</sup> For no. 12, see M. Richard, *Inventaire des manuscrits grecs des Fonds Sloane additional, Egerton, Cottonian et Stowe du British Museum* (Paris, 1952), 52. For no. 14, see Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta', 234–5; Martini and Bassi, *Catalogus codicum*, I, 493–4. For no. 41, see Hunger, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften*, 77.

<sup>89</sup> For bibliography on the manuscript, see p. 135 (footnote 59 above).

<sup>90</sup> Martini and Bassi, *Catalogus codicum*, I, 1022–3; Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, xxxiii–xxiv.

<sup>91</sup> For bibliography on the manuscript, see p. 135 (footnote 58 above).

author of a high-quality history, one worth reading in tandem with the works of Akropolites and the classicizing histories of Choniates and Anna Komnene.

Codex 31 is the well-known Modena manuscript famous for its wonderful illustrations of Byzantine emperors.<sup>92</sup> In its current form, the manuscript was produced in two stages. A fourteenth-century scribe copied the second volume of the chronicle in the codex, without, however, being able to finish it. In the second half of the fifteenth century, another scribe added some extra folios at the front and the back of the manuscript in order to complete Zonaras' text and to insert the series of catalogues he had at his disposal. Judging from the varied contents of these catalogues, from emperors to patriarchs and offices, this scribe sought to produce, in a sense, a complete guide to the history of the imperial capital. In the *Epitome*, he found the ideal text that could form the basis for this wide-ranging enterprise.

Special mention should be made of manuscript 39, which is a miscellany—a codex that includes a great number of extracts from different kinds of works. It preserves twelve brief texts and excerpts. It was produced by seven different scribes, the last of whom copied the part of the *Epitome* which begins with Constantine's reign as sole emperor and ends shortly after the period of Arkadios and Honorius. Apart from Zonaras' chronicle, excerpts from four historical texts also make their appearance in the codex: Appian's *Roman History*; Diodorus Siculus' *Historical Library*; the Greek translation of Eutropius' *Breviarium* produced in the late fourth century by Paeanius; and the history of the city of Herakleia Pontike written by the ancient historian Memnon. The extract from Memnon's work is derived from Photios' *Bibliotheca*, since the original text had been lost by the fifteenth century. The contents of the manuscript certainly reflect the historical interests of its commissioner. What sets this manuscript apart from the other historical codices is that an extract of the *Epitome* is found in it along with works focusing on the ancient and late antique history of the Empire, instead of the more recent Byzantine history. This codex is known to have been commissioned by cardinal Bessarion (d. 1472) towards the end of his life and perfectly exemplifies Bessarion's broad historical interests.<sup>93</sup>

It is worth noting here that all Marciani codices under consideration here (nos. 10, 13, 22, 39, and 40) were acquired by cardinal Bessarion, who made a systematic effort to collect and copy classical Greek and Byzantine historical writings. Bessarion was the first to bring together in a single manuscript the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon (*Hellenica*), the aim being to compile 'a sequential "history of Greece"'.<sup>94</sup> A similar purpose would undoubtedly underlie

<sup>92</sup> I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), 172–83; Büttner-Wobst, 'Nachtrag'.

<sup>93</sup> I. Hadot, *Simplicius, sa vie, son oeuvre, sa survie* (Berlin, 1987).

<sup>94</sup> A. Kaldellis, *Byzantine Readings of Ancient Historians* (London, 2015), 7.



his intention to acquire a codex containing both Zonaras' and Choniates' works (no. 40), and so to have at his disposal a continuous history of the Byzantine Empire from the Creation to the early thirteenth century.

At least three manuscripts provide us with some prosopographical information about their commissioners or early owners. The first is no. 3. In the bottom margin of f. 2<sup>r</sup>, where the chronicle begins, the person in possession of the codex writes, in his own hand, 'The Zonaras of Basil, the Great Koumnos' ('ὁ Ζωναράς τοῦ Βασιλείου τοῦ μεγάλου Κούμνου').<sup>95</sup> The surname Koumnos is probably a corrupted version of Choumnos, a well-known family name attested from the mid-eleventh century.<sup>96</sup> Basil must have descended from this family and might, too, have occupied a significant post in the imperial bureaucracy, as the epithet 'the Great' suggests.<sup>97</sup> A second manuscript whose original owner is revealed in a scribal note is no. 13, a codex which is securely dated to 1420 and eventually found its way into Bessarion's collection.<sup>98</sup> This one was commissioned by Demetrios Laskaris Leontares, a prominent statesman and general of the early fifteenth century, who, according to Doukas' history, enjoyed high honours under John VII Palaiologos (r. 1390).<sup>99</sup> Unlike these manuscripts, whose owners were laymen, codex 37 was in the possession of an ecclesiastic, a priest whose surname was Bolenos.<sup>100</sup> It is not clear whether he also commissioned the codex. Bolenos is a good example of a relatively well-educated churchman who was able to read a text such as the *Epitome* with its archaizing, middlebrow Greek.

<sup>95</sup> Leone, 'La tradizione manoscritta', 228; Molin Pradel and Hajdú, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften*, 354–9.

<sup>96</sup> A. Kazhdan, 'Choumnos', *ODB*, I, 433. We are aware of several bureaucratic officials with this surname, such as a certain Manuel Choumnos, a *kouropalates* who lived in the early twelfth century, a *nomophylax* and *sebastos* Theodore Choumnos, who in the late twelfth century served under Andronikos I, and, of course, the statesman and prolific scholar Nikephoros Choumnos, who rose to high office during the reign of Andronikos II. For the seal bearing the name of Manuel *kouropalates*, see V. Šandrovskaja, 'Popravki i dopolnenija k 'Katalogu molivdovulov' B.A. Pančenko', *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 38 (1977), 102–19, at 117 (no. 59). For Theodore Choumnos, see P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, and N. Svoronos, *Actes de Lavra. Première partie: Des origines à 1204, Archives de l'Athos*, V (Paris 1970), 344.16. On Nikephoros Choumnos, see A. Riehle, 'Epistolography as Autobiography: Remarks on the Letter-Collections of Nikephoros Choumnos', *Parekbolai*, 2 (2012), 1–22.

<sup>97</sup> The most obvious assumption is that he held the office of the Grand Logothete, but this cannot be proved. Notably, the name Basil appears in the family of Choumnoi, as we learn from a seal dated to c. the 1050s: C. Stavrakos, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel mit Familiennamen aus der Sammlung des Numismatischen Museums Athen* (Wiesbaden 2000), no. 279.

<sup>98</sup> This date when the manuscript was completed is noted by the scribe, a priest called George Vastralites, in the last folio of the codex: Mioni, *Thesaurus Antiquus*, 151–2.

<sup>99</sup> Doukas (historian), *Dukas Chronographia—Byzantiner und Osmanen im Kampf um die Macht und das Überleben (1341–1462)*, ed. by D. R. Reinsch (Berlin and Boston, 2020), 252.7–16 (chapter 23.5), where the author provides some biographical information about Demetrios Leontares. See also E. Trapp, 'Λεοντάρης Δημήτριος, Λάσκαρις', *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, VI (1983), 162.

<sup>100</sup> For information on the manuscript, see p. 140 (footnote 85) of the book.

### 7.3 Scribal Practices and Marginalia

The investigation of this large body of manuscript material has helped to advance our understanding of the parts of the *Epitome* that were read most, by whom, and in what contexts. But my focus so far has been solely on evidence collected from the manuscript tradition of the chronicle, not the ways in which the text itself is actually written in the codices. First, what I would like to investigate here is whether the fact that Zonaras' narrative was not divided into shorter books posed a problem for scribes who copied the work, and if so, how they tried to handle it. Next, I want to consider various marginal scholia which were penned by either the scribe of a manuscript or later readers commenting on the text.<sup>101</sup>

For practical reasons, this investigation inevitably relies only on a select sample of the codices listed in Table 7.1; these are nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 21, 25, 27, and 30.<sup>102</sup> The criteria by which these manuscripts were chosen were the date of production and accessibility. All twelve codices are dateable to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Of these, nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, and 27 are codices on which the edition of the *Epitome* by Pinder and Büttner-Wobst was based.<sup>103</sup> Most of these manuscripts have been made available online by the libraries in which they are kept. I was able to consult codex 30 in person in the Bodleian Library.

The first observation to make is that the copyists of these manuscripts share a common method for presenting Jewish and Roman history, the two broad thematic sections of the chronicle. They all understand this basic thematic articulation of the text, and find it necessary to make the thematic division of the work explicit to their readers. For the Roman section, the manuscripts nos. 1, 2, 11, 12, and 21 preserve exactly the same heading: 'About the Romans and Rome itself' ('Περὶ Ῥωμαίων καὶ τῆς Ῥώμης αὐτῆς'), a likely echo of Zonaras' original title.<sup>104</sup> Traces of another transmission, in which the name of Romulus appears in

<sup>101</sup> Previous studies discussing marginal comments and their implications in codices transmitting historical works include, for instance: Theodore Skoutariotes, *Chronica*, ed. by R. Tocci (Berlin, 2015), 54\*–63\*; Choniates, *Historia*, xxi, xxiv–xxv, xxviii–xxx, xxxii, xliii, lii. See also the studies: A. M. Forcina, *Lettori bizantini di Zosimo: le note marginali del cod. Vat. gr. 156* (Milan, 1987); R. Maisano, 'Note su Giorgio Cedreno e la tradizione storiografica bizantina', *Rivista di studi bizantini e slavi*, 3 (1983), 227–48.

<sup>102</sup> H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris, 1888), 128–9 (for nos. 1, 2, 21), 138 (for no. 25); Molin Pradel and Hajdú, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften*, 354–9 (for no. 3) and 359–63 (for no. 27); Mercati and Franchi, *Codices Vaticani*, 161–2 (for no. 5); H. Stevenson, *Codices manuscripti palatini graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae* (Rome, 1885), 148–9 (for no. 6); A. M. Bandini, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Laurentianae*, II (Florence, 1768), col. 658 (for no. 7); Hunger, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften*, 20–1 (for no. 11). For nos. 12 and 30, see, respectively, p. 143 (footnote 88) and p. 140 (footnote 85) of this book.

<sup>103</sup> The last manuscript which has been used by Büttner-Wobst for the edition of Books 13 to 18 of the *Epitome*, the *Monac. gr.* 93, is dated much later, to the sixteenth century, and has therefore been excluded.

<sup>104</sup> No. 1: 160<sup>v</sup>, no. 2: 107<sup>v</sup>, no. 11: 141<sup>v</sup>, no. 12: 97<sup>v</sup>, no. 21: 201<sup>r</sup>.

the heading of the section, can be found in codices 5 and 7.<sup>105</sup> All the scribes ensure that these titles stand out by writing them in large letters or within decorative patterns.

There are also other parts of text which several copyists try to separate from the rest of the narrative by using titles. Notable examples are the accounts of the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans and the birth of Christ.<sup>106</sup> Such items were obviously considered by scribes to be of great significance and had to be highlighted accordingly. It is worth mentioning that the title given to the conquest of Jerusalem in codices nos. 1 and 12, namely 'Epitome of the Capture of Jerusalem' ('*Ἐπιτομή τῆς ἀλώσεως τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ*'), betrays the scribes' perception of the narrative as an abbreviated form of a more extensive presentation of the fall of the Holy City, that of Josephus.

Notwithstanding these common features in the internal organization of the work, copyists treated the chronicle very freely. Zonaras' account of Jewish history in particular is 'raw' material in terms of its division into shorter pieces. No tidy pattern emerges as to how scribes break the narrative. It would seem probable, therefore, that the Jewish section of the chronicle was originally a continuous narrative, or that it was split into several very extensive chapters. Scribes must have encountered long pieces of text and felt that these would be extremely inconvenient to readers. For this reason, they took it upon themselves to break them into shorter segments. They also added titles to shorter parts of Zonaras' Jewish account, to make it easier for those reading the manuscripts to find information on certain subjects.

Titles in the presentation of the first Roman kings, and the Roman and Byzantine emperors follow a much more regular pattern in all twelve manuscripts. The copyists have a very good understanding of the author's own organization of the text into units of reigns and use titles which correspond to this. Particularly for Zonaras' narrative of imperial history—from the age of Augustus onwards—the titles take a standard form: 'The reign of [...]' with scribes using the terms 'μοναρχία', 'αὐταρχία', 'βασιλεία', and 'αὐτοκρατορία' interchangeably. We also find titles such as 'The accession of [...]' ('*ἀναγόρευσις/ἀνάρρησις τοῦ [...]*') in nos. 3 and 12. It is noteworthy that in codices 1, 2, 7, 11, and 30, these titles are always written either on top of Zonaras' narrative of an emperor (nos. 1, 2, and 30) or prior to it in a continuous text (nos. 7 and 11). The scribes are essentially employing them as headings to introduce the section dedicated to a new emperor, and to emphasize to readers the division of the chronicle into reigns.

<sup>105</sup> No. 5: 73<sup>r</sup>: 'About Rome, and Romulus and the Romans' ('*Περὶ Ῥώμης καὶ Ῥωμύλου, καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων*'); no. 7: 65<sup>r</sup>: 'About Romus and Romulus and the Romans' ('*Περὶ Ῥώμον καὶ Ῥωμύλου καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων*').

<sup>106</sup> For the part of the text recording the fall of Jerusalem, see no. 1: 150<sup>r</sup>, no. 5: 69<sup>r</sup>, and no. 12: 87<sup>r</sup>. For the chapter narrating the birth of Christ, see no. 1: 272<sup>r</sup>, no. 3: 297<sup>v</sup>, no. 27: 44<sup>r</sup>, and no. 30: 50<sup>r</sup>.

Matters become more intriguing when one looks at idiosyncratic features that characterize certain scribes. Those who copied codices 25 and 30, for instance, occasionally include in the title of a new emperor the duration of his reign, apparently considering it a significant item of information that should be given special prominence.<sup>107</sup> Manuscripts 5 and 6, in addition, bear a great number of marginal titles penned by their scribes that indicate pieces of the text which concern patriarchal history.<sup>108</sup> The titles are typically as follows: 'About patriarchs' ('Περὶ πατριαρχῶν') or 'About a patriarch' ('Περὶ πατριάρχου'). These scribes found that Zonaras' material about ecclesiastical affairs, interwoven into imperial history, was not straightforward for a reader to find, and saw fit to make it stand out. They were probably aware that the work appealed to readers who had a great interest in Church history, as, for example, the author of the ecclesiastical chronicle in the *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25 or the priest Bolenos, who owned a copy of the *Epitome*, must have done.

The most peculiar example of adding titles to the reigns of individual emperors comes from codex 30; in this case, the scribe, judging from his neat handwriting, was probably a professional. The headings opening the reign of a new ruler are very clearly visible; they are written in red ink and large letters. For twenty-one emperors, from Augustus to Macrinus, the copyist lists next to the name of the emperor a series of strange epithets, usually five to nine in number, which designate features of his appearance and, less frequently, traits of his personality. It is worth providing a couple of examples. The first is the heading given to the section dedicated to the reign of Tiberius: 'The monarchy of Tiberius, who was old, of medium height and slim, with curly hair, beautiful eyes, a dark complexion, short hair and a somewhat flat nose. He ruled for twenty-two years and five months' ('μοναρχία Τιβερίου, ὃς μὲν γέρων, διμοιραῖος, λεπτός, οὐδλος, εὐόφθαλμος, μελάγχρους, κοντόθριξ, ὑπόσιμος. οὗτος ἐκράτησεν ἕτη κβ', μῆνας ε').<sup>109</sup> The title for the reign of Commodus is as follows: 'The reign of Commodus, son of Marcus, and what he looked like. He was of medium height and good size; he had fair skin, greyish eyes, broad face, a good chest and beautiful hair; he was blond with a short beard' ('βασιλεία Κομόδου υἱοῦ Μάρκου καὶ οἷος ἦν: διμοιραῖος, εὖογκος, λευκός, ὑπόγλαυκος, πλάτοψις, εὖστηθος, γλυκόθριξ, ξανθός, ἀρχιγένειος').<sup>110</sup>

The epithets found in the headings are not present in Zonaras' narrative. The scribe derives them from an external source: the *Chronographia* of John Malalas, where they are used to characterize the same emperors.<sup>111</sup> Unlike the scribe of the

<sup>107</sup> See, for example, no. 25: 254<sup>f</sup>, 259<sup>f</sup>, and 271<sup>v</sup>; no. 30: pages 18, 63, 71, and 89.

<sup>108</sup> See, for example, no. 5: 154<sup>f</sup>, 161<sup>v</sup>, 194<sup>f</sup>, 198<sup>f</sup>, 203<sup>f</sup>, 211<sup>f</sup> and 242<sup>v</sup>; no. 6: 197<sup>v</sup>, 198<sup>v</sup>, 200<sup>v</sup>, 201<sup>v</sup>, 207<sup>v</sup>, and 238<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>109</sup> *Oxon. Crom.* 24, page 63.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, page 113.

<sup>111</sup> In Malalas' text, similar epithets appear in connection not only with Roman emperors but also with Greek and Trojan heroes, as well as with the Apostles: E. and Michael Jeffreys, 'Portraits', in *Studies*, ed. by Jeffreys, 231–43. Pages 232–40 include a complete catalogue of all epithets along with

manuscript, however, Malalas continues to embed into his text such epithets for the emperors after Macrinus. A possible explanation why the scribe stopped making use of them at that point would be that he did not have the entire chronicle of Malalas readily available to him. Another explanation could be that the commissioner of the manuscript, who supervised the copying of the chronicle, was dissatisfied with this practice. The scribe usually repeats all the epithets encountered in his source in the same order, but sometimes omits or replaces one with a simpler synonym of the same root. Here are some examples.

	Malalas	<i>Oxon. Crom. 24</i>	
[Augustus]	‘κονδοειδής’	‘κοντός’	short
[Augustus]	‘εὔρινος’	‘εὔριν’	with a good nose
[Galba]	‘γρυπόρυγχος’	‘γρυπόρριν’	with a hooked nose
[Pertinax]	‘όλοπόλιος’	‘πολιός τήν κάραν (και) τὸ γένειον’	totally grey haired

It has been demonstrated that the *Chronographia* of Malalas was not a very well-known work among Byzantine readers.<sup>112</sup> The copyist found this material about Roman emperors in Malalas' chronicle and must have assumed it was unknown to his audience. He therefore decided to insert these pieces of information into his titles of Zonaras' account of Roman emperors. He probably considered them useful and interesting, and thought they would complement Zonaras' text.

In addition to the titles used by the scribes of these manuscripts, several items of marginalia also provide clues about readers' reactions and responses to Zonaras' narrative. Although he very rarely writes marginal scholia, the scribe of codex 11 feels that two extracts in the recording of Byzantine history need a word of comment. The first is the story of the iconoclast monk who was rumoured to have deceived the emperor Leo V the Armenian into resuming the campaign against icons. Prior to his accession to the throne, Leo was said to have received a prophecy by a monk at Philomelion, who predicted his imperial destiny. After he took up the reins of the state, he sent gifts to the monk, who, unbeknown to him, had died some time before. A monk in his place warned the emperor to abolish the 'idols' lest he should fall from power very soon.<sup>113</sup> Struck by Zonaras' account of how the iconoclastic controversy was rekindled, the scribe notes in the margin of the manuscript: 'look at how powerful the Devil is' ('όρα πόσον ὁ Σατανὰς ἰσχύει').<sup>114</sup>

their meanings, which has helped me to translate the two extracts of the Cromwell manuscript quoted above, and also the four epithets listed below.

<sup>112</sup> W. Treadgold, 'The Byzantine World Histories of John Malalas and Eustathius of Epiphania', *The International History Review*, 29 (2007), 709–45. Older scholarship tended to believe that Malalas' work was fairly popular.

<sup>113</sup> *Epitome*, III, 322.13–323.7.

<sup>114</sup> *Vind. hist. gr.* 16, f. 382<sup>v</sup>.

He concludes from the text that this incident was a devilish deed, a belief he apparently wanted to make known to others who would read the codex after him. The second segment of the text that catches the scribe's attention is the edifying moral that the author himself draws from the unfortunate end of the emperor Romanos Lekapenos and his sons, namely that providence always punishes those who commit a crime. In the margin just below this segment, the scribe adds in red ink his own interpretation of Zonaras' claim: 'This which is said is fearful' ('φοβερόν τὸ ῥῆμα').<sup>115</sup> Only rarely do we find remarks such as these, which give us a glimpse of the emotional impact the text has had on a reader. For the copyist, this is a formidable claim by Zonaras, one which fills him with awe. In Chapter 3, I argued that the chronicler deliberately interpolated Skylitzes, his source for the reign of the Lekapenoi, in order to highlight to his audience that the fate of the usurpers was a result of divine retribution.<sup>116</sup> This marginal comment demonstrates that he was successful in conveying, at least to some of his recipients, the ethical message of the story of the Lekapenoi.

There are a number of scholia in the margins of manuscript no. 1 which have been penned by different hands.<sup>117</sup> The majority of them were inscribed by a later reader, the individual who composed the fairly lengthy commentary of the *Epitome* that appears in ff. 1<sup>r</sup>-2<sup>v</sup> of the codex. Neither these scholia nor the commentary, in other words, were written by the monk Mokios Taranes, the copyist of the manuscript. An extensive analysis of the commentary follows in the next part of this chapter. Most marginal notes by this hand are cursorily written and hence difficult to read. Some of the passages that are of interest to this individual relate to the biblical contents of the chronicle. I offer a couple of examples. Reaching the story of the prophet from Judah who visited king Jeroboam I,<sup>118</sup> the reader records the *sticheron* of an ode chanted during Great Lent which concerns this particular prophet.<sup>119</sup> Another passage that he finds worthy of note is the one recounting how Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph. From Genesis and Zonaras, too, we learn that, despite Joseph's displeasure, Jacob put his right hand on Ephraim, the younger boy, instead of on Manasseh, the older, because many nations would eventually descend from Ephraim.<sup>120</sup> Reading Zonaras' narrative, the unknown individual notes the following words in the margin of the

<sup>115</sup> *Vind. hist. gr.* 16, f. 415<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>116</sup> See p. 60 of this book.

<sup>117</sup> Astruc and Géhin, *Les manuscrits grecs*, 56-7, at 56.

<sup>118</sup> *Epitome*, I, 153-4.

<sup>119</sup> The *sticheron*, in f. 45<sup>v</sup> of the *Par. gr.* 1715, is from the eighth ode chanted on Monday of the second week of the Great Lent. The reader writes: 'This *sticheron* is in the *Triodion*: Who ate long ago the man of God? The wild lion, because he (the man) accepted the food of disobedience due to the deceit of the Prophet. Be careful, my soul, do not be deceived by the snake of gluttony' ('τόδε τὸ στιχηρόν ἐν τῷ τριοδίῳ: τίς βιβρώσκει θεοῦ τὸν ἄνθρωπον πάλαι; θῆρ ὁ λέων, ἐκ πλάνης τοῦ προφήτου παρακοῆς τὰ βρώματα δεξάμενον. Βλέπε οὖν, ψυχὴ μου, μή σε ἀπατήσῃ γαστριμαργίας ὄφρις'). I have corrected the spelling mistakes and the punctuation of the scribe.

<sup>120</sup> *Epitome*, I, 51.

manuscript: 'look at how blessing was given to the nations' ('ὄρα ὅπως τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνων ἐδόθη εὐλογία').<sup>121</sup> It should be mentioned here that this reader repeatedly begins his scholia by using the verb 'ὄρα' (meaning 'look' or 'note'), as if directly addressing subsequent readers of the manuscript.<sup>122</sup>

The short extract of the chronicle where Zonaras tells us that the emperor Leo VI was a fervent practitioner of divination and astronomy catches the eye of a later reader of codex 12, who, judging from his handwriting, can be dated to the fifteenth century.<sup>123</sup> Written in a careless fashion, his scholion in the margins of ff. 334<sup>v</sup>–335<sup>r</sup> is hard to make out. As far as I can tell, it reads as follows:

[...] of divination, philosophy, astronomy [...] astrology. Such were the seers of those times. You should look at the Roman emperors, also concerning their philosophers. Nobody practised divination without astronomy and philosophy and astrology.

\*\*\* μαντείας καὶ σοφίας καὶ ἀστρονομίας \*\*\* ἀποτελεσματικῆς. Τοιοῦτοι ἦτον οἱ μάντιες τῶν καιρῶν ἐκείνων. Πρόσχευ καὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους τοὺς βασιλεῖς καὶ περὶ φιλοσόφους· οὐδεὶς ἐμέτεχε μαντείας χωρὶς ἀστρονομίας καὶ φιλοσοφίας καὶ ἀποτελεσματικῆς.<sup>124</sup>

Prompted by Leo's aptitude for the 'arts' of foretelling the future, the commentator makes the general remark that in the time of the Roman emperors, nobody would practice divination without having a knowledge of astronomy, philosophy, and astrology. He implicitly criticizes all those who, in his own time, could supposedly predict the future, but had no idea about astronomy or philosophy.

The marginalia of codex 5 is worth detailed investigation. There exist three poems in the manuscript, all written in the popular dodecasyllabic verse and all penned by the scribe who copied the chronicle.<sup>125</sup> Located in the margins of f. 33<sup>v</sup> and f. 61<sup>v</sup>, the first two are both six verses in length.<sup>126</sup> Prior to the poem in f. 33<sup>v</sup>, we find the name of its composer: Constantine. I will elaborate on the identity of this person shortly afterwards, discussing the longest poem found in the manuscript. The impetus for the poem in f. 33<sup>v</sup> comes from Zonaras' description of scaphism ('σκάφευσις'), a gruesome method of execution common among ancient Persians.<sup>127</sup> Taking material from the Plutarchean *Life of Artaxerxes*, the

<sup>121</sup> See *Par. gr.* 1715, f. 14<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>122</sup> Such scholia are found, for instance, in ff. 57<sup>v</sup>, 59<sup>r</sup> and 82<sup>r</sup> of the manuscript.

<sup>123</sup> *Epitome*, III, 445.14–446.1. The reader notes a mark beside this passage in the manuscript. He repeats the same mark in the top margin of the codex, where he inscribes his comment of the passage.

<sup>124</sup> I correct the spelling mistakes that appear in the text.

<sup>125</sup> For information on the manuscript, see p. 146 (footnote 102) in this book.

<sup>126</sup> In their catalogue, Mercati and Franchi note only the first and the last verse of each poem: Mercati and Franchi, *Codices Vaticani*, 161–2. Below, I present my own edition of the poems. The second one is also edited in the DBBE with minor alterations, which I indicate in the footnotes.

<sup>127</sup> *Epitome*, I, 223.12–224.15.



chronicler explains that victims subjected to the torture of scaphism would be fastened to a skiff and repeatedly stung by insects. They eventually died of septic shock.<sup>128</sup> Constantine's poem is as follows:

Of Constantine

What a tub and trough of flesh, not dough,  
or also a furnace which dissolves flesh,  
or a tomb or some sepulchre made of wood!  
Oh bitterness, which gushes from honey  
and milk! It is not food what feeds  
the worms that eat the one who is buried, oh my!

T *Κωνσταντίνου*

1 *βαβαὶ σκάφη καὶ μάκτρα σαρκὸς οὐ ζύμης*  
*ἢ καὶ κλίβανος ἐκδαπανώσας σάρκας*  
*ἢ τάφος ἢ σορός τις ἐκ ξυλουργίας.<sup>129</sup>*  
*ὦ τοῦ μέλιτος ἐκβρούουσα πικρία*  
5 *καὶ τοῦ γάλακτος οὐ τροφή τὸ δὴ τρέφον*  
*σκώληκας οἴμοι τοῦ ταφέντος τοὺς φάγους.<sup>130</sup>*

The narrative about scaphism clearly made a vivid impression on Constantine. In an almost lamentatory tone, the poet expresses how appalled he is by the cruel torture captives were subjected to.

The author of the verses in f. 61<sup>v</sup>, a poem also of an elegiac character, is spurred by similar feelings. He is repulsed when reading that Herod the Great ordered the strangling of his two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, who were executed in about 7 BC.<sup>131</sup> Inspired by Zonaras' account of this episode, he writes the following verses:<sup>132</sup>

Oh, the former murderer of infants became murderer of  
[his] children  
[and], to express his wickedness in short, a murderer of men.  
A mind of leather or a heart of stone!

<sup>128</sup> For information on scaphism, see J. Lockwood, *Six-Legged Soldiers: Using Insects as Weapons of War* (Oxford, 2009), 36.

<sup>129</sup> In verse 2, the last word is not clear. To me, it seems it could be either 'σάρκας' or 'σάρκαν', with the first option being more plausible. The *DBBE* offers 'κρέα' instead: see *DBBE* (consulted 10.11.2020), <https://www.dbbe.ugent.be/types/2332>.

<sup>130</sup> In verse 5, the *DBBE* offers 'δε', instead of 'δη'.

<sup>131</sup> *Epitome*, I, 451–52.

<sup>132</sup> See also *DBBE* (consulted 10.11.2020), <https://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrences/17770>.

Oh, a man who kills all people bears the name 'Herod'<sup>133</sup>  
 You hate children, but animals love [their] children,  
 oh, nature fiercer even than lions!

- 1            τεκνοκτόνος φεῦ ὁ πρὸ τοῦ βρεφοκτόνος·  
              τὸ πᾶν συνάξειν πικρὸν, ἀνθρωποκτόνος·  
              νοῦς δερμάτινος ἢ λίθινος καρδία·  
              φερωνύμως φεῦ ἡρώδης παντοκτόνος·  
 5            σὺ μισοτεκνεῖς φιλοτεκνεῖ θηρία·  
              ὦ καὶ λεόντων ἀγριωτέρα φύσις.

The composer of the poem employs four compound nouns whose second part is a derivative of 'κτείνω' ('kill') to stress the atrociousness of Herod's crime. A detail about the use of the word 'μισοτεκνεῖς' should be mentioned. In the corresponding section of the *JW*, where Josephus recounts the execution of Alexander and Aristobulus by their father, Herod is called 'μισοτεκνότατος'.<sup>134</sup> There is a strong case, therefore, that the composer must also have had access to the source on which the chronicler himself relied for his presentation of the Jewish past. We cannot know with certainty whether this poem, too, was created by Constantine, although it seems more likely that both marginal poems (or, as we shall see, all three poems found in the codex) were indeed composed by the same person. In any case, these two poems clearly show how a group of readers could be emotionally engaged by Zonaras' narrative and give vent to their feelings by composing their own pieces of writing.<sup>135</sup>

Overall, this selective number of marginal comments in manuscripts of the *Epitome* indicates that many different parts of the text caught the attention of the audience and provoked various responses.

## 7.4 Two Further Testimonies to the Reception of the Chronicle

Aside from the marginal notes found in these manuscripts, there are two longer pieces of writing that can help us identify the elements which made the *Epitome* a

<sup>133</sup> This phrase is difficult to translate. 'Herod' is a name of Greek origin: see W. R. F. Browning, 'Herod', in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2009), ebook. Although its etymology is not clear, the word does not seem to have connotations of crime. To my mind, the poet may mean that the name 'Herod' has become synonymous with 'murderer'; when someone commits a mass murder, he is characterized as a 'Herod'. Alternatively, he may create a neologism himself, employing and playing with the name 'Herod' as a synonym to 'murderer'.

<sup>134</sup> Josephus, *JW*, 134.14 (Book 1, chapter 589).

<sup>135</sup> Another example of a manuscript in which we find short verses at the margins commenting on the historical works of the codex is the eleventh-century *Par. gr.* 1711: P. Odorico, 'Poésies à la marge, réflexions personnelles? Quelques observations sur les poésies du *Parisinus graecus* 1711', in *Poetry and its Contexts in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, ed. by F. Bernard and K. Demoen (Farnham, 2012), 207–24.

popular work. The first of these is a prose text of an encomiastic character which is included in codex no. 1 (*Par. gr.* 1715), the oldest manuscript that preserves the chronicle. The second is a poem of twenty-nine verses. It is transmitted in codex no. 5 (*Vat. gr.* 136), along with the two short poems discussed above.

#### 7.4.1 The Prose Text of Codex No. 1 (*Par. gr.* 1715)

For the prose text, I use the term 'commentary', since its anonymous author provides us with extensive remarks about many things that attracted his attention in Zonaras' narrative. It was noted earlier that the commentary was produced by the same person who added most scholia to the margins of the codex.<sup>136</sup> The text can, therefore, be securely dated to after 1289, when the copyist of the manuscript, Mokios Taranes, completed his task.<sup>137</sup> In the manuscript, the commentary precedes the *Epitome*, which starts on f. 3<sup>r</sup>. Due to the fact that he did not have enough writing space, the author of the commentary added a folio at the beginning of the codex.<sup>138</sup> One would reasonably expect, therefore, that this person was the owner of the manuscript.

We are not given any clues about the author's identity. Assuming that this person was the owner of the manuscript, we can deduce that he must have been a wealthy man who could afford to pay a competent professional scribe to reproduce a long text. Also, the commentary evidently came from the pen of a man who had received a good education and was able to use sophisticated grammar and vocabulary. The linguistic register of the commentary is archaizing, elevated middlebrow Greek. The author does not employ rare Attic Greek vocabulary or grammatical types of the pluperfect, but makes frequent use of forms of the perfect (for example, 'ἐντέταχέ', 'ἀνεληλακώς', 'πεφρόντικεν', 'διαπέφευγέ', etc.) and verbs in the optative (for example, 'παραιτήσαιτο', 'θαυμάσειε', 'φαίνοιτ' ἄν', 'γνοίη', etc.). He is also familiar with some difficult grammatical forms, such as passive aorists ('φιλοπονηθείση', 'ἐξεδιαιτήθη', 'συννεχθῆναι', etc.) and irregular aorists ('διέλωμαι', 'παρεθέμην', 'εἶλε', 'ἀναβῆναι', 'προείλετο', etc.). Although some of the periods he writes are quite long, the flow of the text is easy to follow overall.

Grigoriadis considers it likely that the writer was a historian himself, since he seems well acquainted with the stylistic qualities that a remarkable historical account should possess and by which it should be judged.<sup>139</sup> The scholar has put forward Niketas Choniates and Constantine Akropolites as possible candidates. The former, who lived and died much earlier than the date of the manuscript's

<sup>136</sup> See p. 150 of this book.

<sup>137</sup> Astruc and Géhin, *Les manuscrits grecs*, 57.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>139</sup> Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 113–14.

production, must definitely be excluded.<sup>140</sup> The latter, however, is a definitive possibility.<sup>141</sup> As was shown above, Constantine had access to or even possessed a copy of Zonaras, as he made abundant use of the *Epitome* for his own chronicle.<sup>142</sup> Further, the manuscript he had at his disposal contained, if not the entire chronicle, at least the section from the Principate onwards,<sup>143</sup> as is the case with codex 1. Constantine, moreover, would slightly paraphrase or repeat word for word the text of his source, from which one can infer that he admired the linguistic and literary virtues of Zonaras' account. Likewise, the remarks of the anonymous commentator reflect much admiration for the chronicler's language. Constantine was a well-known book collector, whose library included a remarkable variety of works, such as writings by Heraclitus and Aelius Aristides, and the poems of George Pisides.<sup>144</sup> A survey of his collection reveals that he was fond of books which were 'stockpiles' of earlier texts; he possessed a copy of Andronikos Kamateros' *Sacred Arsenal* and is known to have requested a friend to lend him an epitome of Aristotle's works so that he could have his own copy made.<sup>145</sup> Zonaras' *Epitome* could well fit into this pattern of interest.

In terms of writing style, in addition, the commentary and Constantine's works (his epistles and hagiographical texts) have some features in common.<sup>146</sup> Both the commentator and Constantine write in elevated, archaizing Greek, mix lengthy and short sentences, and use rhetorical figures, such as chiasmi and *homoioleuta*.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, the author of the commentary introduces his text by

<sup>140</sup> See also Kaltsogianni, *Αγιολογικό και όμιλητικό έργο*, 8 (footnote 18).

<sup>141</sup> Astruc and Géhin, too, argue that the treatise was composed by a scholar at the first quarter of the fourteenth century: Astruc and Géhin, *Les manuscrits grecs*, 57.

<sup>142</sup> A man of Constantine's social status would surely have the financial means to order his own copy of Zonaras' work. From the will of Constantine Akropolites, we learn that he had inherited a substantial amount of money from his father, George Akropolites, which allowed him to live comfortably and devote himself to learning. The will, along with two other texts of Constantine Akropolites, has been edited by Maximilian Treu: C. Akropolites, *Διαθήκη του μεγάλου λογοθέτου Κωνσταντίνου του Ακροπολίτου*, ed. by M. Treu, in *Νέος κώδιξ των έργων του μεγάλου λογοθέτου Κωνσταντίνου του Ακροπολίτου, Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος*, 4 (1892), 45–9, at 48.

<sup>143</sup> This is the period broadly covered by the edited abstracts of Akropolites' chronicle, from which one can deduce the strong dependence of Akropolites' text on the *Epitome*: see C7.P28 of the book.

<sup>144</sup> Konstantinidis, *Higher Education*, 144–5.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> For some information on Constantine's epistolary corpus, see S. Kotzabassi, 'Reconsidering the Letters of Constantine Akropolites', in *Myriobiblos. Essays on Byzantine Literature and Culture*, ed. by T. Antonopoulou, S. Kotzabassi, and M. Loukaki (Berlin and Boston, 2015), 211–16; S. Kotzabassi, 'Zum Empfänger des 143. Briefes des Konstantinos Akropolites', *BZ*, 89 (1996), 55–7. For information on Constantine's hagiographical works, see Talbot, 'Literati'; Talbot, 'Hagiography'.

<sup>147</sup> Talbot notes that chiasmi and *homoioleuta* are among the rhetorical figures employed by Constantine in his epistles: Talbot, 'Hagiography', 179. In the commentary of the *Epitome*, chiasmi are the following, for instance, 'teacher of life and model of the things that have been happening in the world' ('*του βίου διδάσκαλον και ύπόδειγμα των έν κόσμω [...] πεφνκόντων*') and 'both acts of people and dispositions of characters' ('*πράγματα προσώπων τε και ήθών διαθέσεις*'): see *Commentary in the Par. gr. 1715*, 568.27–8 and 569.18–19, respectively. In the first example, the structure of the Greek text is: noun in the genitive + noun in the accusative, a pattern which is reversed in the second half of the segment. Both nouns in the accusative refer to and characterize Zonaras' history. In the second example, the structure is: noun in the accusative + noun in the genitive, a pattern which is reversed in the second half of the segment. Both nouns in the accusative refer to the contents of the *Epitome*.

composing a short encomium of Zonaras,<sup>148</sup> this is strongly reminiscent of a saint's life and reflects the commentator's familiarity with themes typical of hagiographical literature. Topoi of a saint's life that appear in the encomium of Zonaras and are also employed by Akropolites in his hagiographical works include praise of the person's lineage and an emphasis on close links with the emperor.<sup>149</sup> What is particularly noteworthy is that the overall style of the encomium, which is of a rhetorical character and offers limited prosopographical data about Zonaras, resembles that of Akropolites' 'rhetorical encomia' of saints, which contain 'little factual information'.<sup>150</sup> According to the commentator, Zonaras was of noble extraction and belonged to the aristocracy. On account of his virtue and excellent rhetorical skills, the author was given great honours by the emperor and enjoyed the rare privilege of being able to talk to him freely. Whether these statements hold any truth is difficult to tell, since we have scarcely any information about Zonaras' career in the service of the Komnenoi. The fact that he was entrusted with high offices in the bureaucracy certainly indicates an appreciation of his talents by the central government. That said, rhetoric seems to have got the better of reality in this case. The commentator clearly tries to emphasize Zonaras' close relationship with the emperor as a means of exalting him. Towards the end of his encomium, he tells us that Zonaras decided to take the monastic oath when he realized how unstable human affairs can be and that, when he withdrew from public life, he did not turn against those who had caused him trouble. His impression, in other words, is that, prior to his retirement, Zonaras had experienced a drastic change in his circumstances and also some animosity against him. Apart from this vague information, readers are not offered any factual details about Zonaras' legal background, his positions in the machinery of state and his scholarly activity. The commentator might have preferred to write an encomium of a more rhetorical, instead of a factual, nature not because he did not have much information about Zonaras at his disposal, but because the contemporary literary audience probably knew much about him already. In all,

A *homoioteleuton* is, for example, the following: 'he also cared for the conciseness which invigorates slow or tedious narratives making them "mobile" as it were by interrupting the flow of thought' ('ἐδέξατο δὲ συντομίᾳς τὸ ὅσον δυνακίητον ἢ γασθρὸν τῶν διηγημάτων διεγειρούσης καὶ ὅσον εὐκίνητον τῇ διακοπῇ ποιούσης'): see *Commentary in the Par. gr. 1715*, 568.44–6. In the Greek text, the *homoioteleuton* is formed with the words 'διεγειρούσης' and 'ποιούσης'. The translation of the extract is taken from Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 114.

<sup>148</sup> *Commentary in the Par. gr. 1715*, 568.8–19 (approximately).

<sup>149</sup> According to Talbot, when he was able to, Constantine tried to insert into his hagiographical texts a paragraph praising the saint's ancestry: Talbot, 'Literati', 441; Talbot, 'Hagiography', 178. In Constantine's hagiographical corpus, the theme of a saint's close link with the emperor is found in: *Encomium Euphrosynae iunioris auctore Constantino Acropolita e codice Ambrosiano H 81*, ed. by F. Halkin, 'Éloge de Sainte Euphrosyne la Jeune par Constantin Acropolite', *Byz*, 57 (1987), 56–65, in 57.76–8 (chapter 1), 62–4 (chapters 9–10); *Λόγος εἰς τὸν ὅσιον καὶ θαυματουργὸν Ζωτικόν*, ed. by T. S. Miller, in 'The Legend of Saint Zotikos According to Constantine Akropolites', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 112 (1994), 339–76 (the edition in 346–68), 350 (chapter 5), 354 (chapter 8).

<sup>150</sup> Talbot, 'Literati', 441; Talbot, 'Hagiography', 178.

there is a fair chance, in my view, that the commentary preceding the chronicle in codex 1 was penned by Constantine Akropolites. If one accepts that the author of this text is indeed Constantine Akropolites, he may well be projecting his own profile onto the encomium of the chronicler here. Much like the image he draws of Zonaras, Akropolites came from an aristocratic family, received an exceptional education and occupied an enviable position in the court of Andronikos Palaiologos, who honoured him with very high offices in state administration. In telling us that Zonaras was allowed to speak freely to the emperor, Constantine may be revealing the nature of his own relationship with Andronikos—or how he would have wished it to be.

The chronicler's idiosyncratic literary and linguistic style is one of the key issues discussed in the text.<sup>151</sup> Expressing his admiration for Zonaras, the commentator enumerates a long list of stylistic virtues which characterize the chronicle and, in his view, befit a historical account. The most significant of these are clarity, a balance between a flat and a closely knit style, solemnity, conciseness, pleasantness, sweetness, flexibility, and pureness of expression. In contrast to Constantine Manasses, who found Zonaras' narrative too austere and tried in his own way to make it more ornate and attractive, the commentator regards the chronicler's vocabulary as flowery and rich. Although he acknowledges that the *Epitome* is not a rhetorical masterpiece, he highlights that Zonaras' linguistic register represents a deliberate authorial choice. In composing his work, Zonaras does not wish to flaunt his linguistic skills. Instead, he aims to produce an account which will aid men to better their lives, adopting a writing style conducive to this goal. Thus, the commentator turns against those authors, primarily historians, who seem to care more for rhetorical elaboration than for the provision of useful and valuable advice.

In addition, he devotes a long paragraph to the presentation of the work's contents; here he makes it clear how he understands the thematic organization of the text. According to the commentator, Zonaras structures his account into histories of peoples and empires: the history of Jews; and the histories of the Persian Empire, the Macedonian Empire under Alexander the Great, and the Roman Empire. The author of the treatise departs significantly from the way in which Zonaras presents the thematic arrangement of his composition. In the *Epitome's* proem, the chronicler explains the division of the work into two broad sections—Jewish and Roman—and introduces the subjects of the Persian and the Macedonian rule in relation to the history of Jerusalem. The commentator, however, perceives the extensive digressions on Cyrus and Alexander as independent sections. His understanding of the text as a sequence of Jewish, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman history calls to mind the apocalyptic visions of

<sup>151</sup> This section of the treatise was translated into English and subsequently analysed by Grigoriadis: Grigoriadis, *Studies*, 114–16.

Daniel, which predicted the historical sequence of four empires: the Babylonian; the Persian; the Greek under Alexander the Great; and the Roman. The author of the treatise might have thought that Zonaras had structured his text according to this pattern. What he adds after this clearly echoes the preamble of the chronicle: that Zonaras recounts not only the acts of the emperors but also those of the patriarchs. He comments approvingly that the chronicler was right to point out instances when a churchman trespassed against laws.

Prior to these remarks on the structure of the *Epitome*, the writer of the commentary lists a series of topics he identifies in the text. These include stories of lands, rivers, and cities, as well as the deeds and dispositions of men. According to the commentator, the narrative also features wars and naval battles, as well as explanations of how armies were positioned on the battlefield and the events that occurred prior to certain combats. Here we encounter yet another contrast with what Zonaras writes in his proem. Echoing the chronicler's own views, the acquaintances who instigated him to compose the *Epitome* disapprove of long historical narratives discussing battles, strategies, and tactics. This obviously indicates that Zonaras' work does not emulate previous histories and avoids elaborating on such themes. The fact that the author of the treatise makes special mention of them, however, indicates that they certainly appealed to him. More than that, he understands military history to be at the core of Zonaras' narrative, a significant topic on which one can derive information from the chronicle.

Perhaps the most remarkable conclusions drawn from the commentary concern the reasons why the chronicle is worth reading. Two related yet distinct reasons are given by the commentator. The first concerns the inherent ethical and moral merit of the chronicle, a feature that is keenly emphasized from the first sentence of the text: '[...] from the stories themselves that are included in the present book, it is obvious that the book constitutes a school of virtue' ('διδασκαλεῖον καθέστηκεν ἀρετῆς ἢ παροῦσα βιβλος, αὐτόθεν καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐστι πρόδηλον τῶν αὐτῶν ἐμφερομένων διηγημάτων').<sup>152</sup> The *Epitome*, according to the commentator, may teach readers about various aspects of human affairs and guide them towards the best courses of action. One can also learn about how unexpectedly a man's life can change. The commentator underlines that the work speaks of both virtues and vices, offering 'representations both of what is good and what is the opposite' ('ἀμφοτέρων γὰρ εἰκόνας, τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἐναντίου').<sup>153</sup> He thus suggests that the text deserves to be studied because it offers models to imitate as well as to avoid. It should be stressed that the chronicle is understood by the commentator to have an educational value as a whole, as a composition which includes material from Christian but also from pagan writers.

<sup>152</sup> *Commentary in the Par. gr.* 1715, 567.2–4.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 568.1.



The second reason why the *Epitome* is useful is that it is distinctively practical in character.<sup>154</sup> The work is said to focus strongly on practical matters. It demonstrates how one should combine theoretical and practical knowledge, and thus accomplish one's duties. The commentator classifies four categories of readers who could benefit from these instructions: private citizens; generals; emperors; and archpriests. This shows that, for him, the chronicle was intended for a wide readership, in the sense that it could recommend itself to the needs of people in different social positions. The view that individuals who occupy a certain office should act in a way appropriate to their station mirrors that of Zonaras, who, in his critique of Alexios Komnenos, claims that a leader is required to exhibit different qualities to those of a common citizen. The commentator does not specify what kind of things a private man and a general can learn from the chronicle. The text, in his view, advises archpriests to adhere firmly to orthodox beliefs and keep the body of the faithful safe. What is most striking, though, is that the author of the treatise explains in great detail how the work provides guidance to an emperor; it describes how a ruler should or should not behave. He clearly believes that the chronicle is addressed to emperors: 'it [the book] urges emperors not to succumb to pleasures [...]' ('*παραίνει δὲ μὴ πρὸς ἡδονὰς ἐκκλίνειν τοὺς βασιλέας [...]*').<sup>155</sup> He says the text teaches that a ruler should always conform to the laws, care for the state and be lenient towards his subjects, as well as think hard and labour to take the best action. Also, emperors should disdain money, avoid burdening people with excessive taxation and entrust the government of public affairs to worthy people. This part of the treatise contains obvious echoes of Zonaras' *Kaiserkritik* of Alexios, particularly in terms of a leader's fiscal policy, his duty to put the common good above his own and to assign offices based on merit. One may suggest that the commentator essentially perceives the *Epitome* to be a 'mirror for princes'.

The question that naturally follows these considerations has to do with the purpose of the commentary: why was it penned, and to whom might it have been addressed? Taking into account its place—on the first pages of the manuscript—and its overall content (basic information about the work's author, style, subjects, and value), one can conclude that it was apparently written as an introduction to the *Epitome*. The reasons which probably prompted the owner of the codex to compose this introductory piece are open to discussion, since the treatise itself does not provide any details of the occasion. In my opinion, it is likely that the owner would do so if he intended to offer or lend it to a friend, a colleague, or a student. In this case, he would see fit to make a preliminary presentation of the work for the sake of his addressee and also give his own interpretation of it. This hypothesis is also supported by the scholia written by the commentator in the

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 570.34–571.17.

<sup>155</sup> *Commentary on the Epitome*, 570.43–4.

margins of the codex. As was observed earlier, many of his comments start with the verb 'ὄρα',<sup>156</sup> which may be an indication that he is directing these remarks to someone reading the manuscript after him.

On the whole, this commentary offers a rare view of the reception of the *Epitome* by a reader who lived approximately one and a half centuries after the work's 'publication'. Like the recipients Zonaras had in mind when he wrote his text, this reader was a learned man. He is particularly impressed by the linguistic register of the narrative, which, in his view, is perfectly compatible with Zonaras' purpose, namely to compose a work of a didactic character. Indeed, the commentator does not emphasize the historical value of the chronicle so much as the educational, stressing that it provides advice on ethical conduct as well as on practical matters. For him, these are the principal reasons why the *Epitome* should be read. Notably, moreover, he approaches certain aspects of the text in ways substantially different to the chronicler's agenda, as this is outlined in the *Epitome's* proem. He largely perceives the work to be a string of individual histories of distinct civilizations, rather than a compendium of Jewish and Roman history, and takes an interest in the events of military history which are recounted in the work, subjects that Zonaras does not find appealing in a historical account.

#### 7.4.2 The Poem of Codex No. 5 (*Vat. gr.* 136)

The longest of the three poems contained in manuscript no. 5 deserves particular notice for its contents and the indications it offers about the circulation of the chronicle.<sup>157</sup> Written in dodecasyllabic metre by the copyist of the codex, the poem has no title. Like that written in f. 33<sup>v</sup>, it is preceded by the name of its author: Constantine. In the seventeenth century, it came to the attention of Leo Allatius, who copied it in ff. 9<sup>r-v</sup> of the codex *Vat. barb. gr.* 74 and added 'To John Zonaras' ('εἰς Ἰωάννην τὸν Ζωναρᾶν') as a title.<sup>158</sup>

The poem is a book epigram, a type of poem which is usually found at the beginning or in the colophon of a manuscript and relates to the text or texts that are included in it. Oddly enough, the epigram is located between the first and the second volume of the chronicle, in f. 101<sup>v</sup> of the codex. It is comparable, to some extent, to an anonymous book epigram contained in the *Par. gr.* 1640, an early fourteenth-century manuscript that preserves Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and

<sup>156</sup> See p. 150 of this book.

<sup>157</sup> The poem has been edited by Pietro Leone in 'Miscellanea Critica (I)'. The quotations of the poem which appear below are taken from Leone's edition. The poem has also been edited in the *DBBE* (consulted 10.11.2020), <https://www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrences/17771>. The *DBBE* offers different readings of some verses of the poem; these, however, do not affect its meaning.

<sup>158</sup> As Leone has pointed out, Allatius made very few amendments to the poem: Leone, 'Miscellanea Critica (I)', 65.

*Anabasis*.<sup>159</sup> This codex draws on a prototype produced in the late ninth or early tenth century, during the reign of Leo VI, to whom it was donated. The epigram was composed by the scribe of the original manuscript and was transmitted along with Xenophon's works contained there.<sup>160</sup> In the Paris manuscript, the epigram is placed between the *Cyropaedia* and the *Anabasis*, at f. 123<sup>v</sup>. What is remarkable, however, is that the poem attached to the manuscript of the *Epitome* is placed between the two volumes of the same text. As we shall see below, it is purposely located at this point because it pertains to the contents of the first volume alone.

Writing in the first person, Constantine addresses Zonaras, who is the imaginary recipient of his composition. The poem has a clearly encomiastic character. Its laudatory tone becomes apparent in the first two verses, where the poet addresses Zonaras and hails him as a writer who stands out among his fellow chroniclers: 'You are to be greatly thanked for your great labours, / John, the wonder of chronographers' ('Χάρις μακρά σοι τῶν μακρῶν πόνων χάριν / Ἰωάννη, τὸ θαῦμα τῶν χρονογράφων'). The epigram begins in a striking manner, namely with the use of an adnomination, a rhetorical scheme in which words of the same grammatical root are repeated. Here, two forms of the noun 'χάρις' and the adjective 'μακρός,-ά,-όν' make their appearance within one verse. The choice of 'χάρις' in connection with the name 'Ἰωάννης' is deliberate: according to the Byzantines, the name was associated with grace.<sup>161</sup> The poet continues by explaining why he benefited from reading the *Epitome*: the work provided him with knowledge, literally 'cognitive food' ('γνωστικὴν τροφήν'). From this statement, it emerges that, in Constantine's opinion, the importance of the *Epitome* derives from its value as a source of information.

It is very common to find dedicatory epigrams addressed to the person to whom the manuscript would be gifted, but quite rare to encounter book epigrams addressed to the author whose works are included in the codex. For example, the anonymous composer of the epigram in the *Par. gr.* 1640 directs a line to

<sup>159</sup> Pérez Martín, 'The Reception of Xenophon', 823–8; Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 208–12; Markopoulos, 'Ἀποσημειώσεις'.

<sup>160</sup> There has been a debate among scholars who studied and commented on the epigram of the *Par. gr.* 1640 as to the content of the original manuscript. Both Markopoulos and Lauxtermann believe that it must have included the *Cyropaedia* as well as the *Anabasis*, whereas Pérez-Martín argues that the manuscript presented to Leo VI contained the *Anabasis* alone, which was preceded by the epigram: Markopoulos, 'Ἀποσημειώσεις', 196–7; Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 210. Pérez-Martín, 'Xenophon', 824.

<sup>161</sup> Indicative of this is the epithet 'χαριτόννημος', meaning 'the one who is named after grace', which is often used by authors to refer to a person called John. For example, the emperor John II Komnenos is characterized by Theodore Prodromos as the 'the offspring of the holy porphyra who is named after grace' ('ὁ χαριτόννημος βλαστὸς τῆς ἱερᾶς πορφύρας'): see Theodore Prodromos, *Τῷ μεγαλονίκῳ αυτοκράτορι κυρῷ Ἰωάννῃ τῷ Κομνηνῷ* (poem 24), in Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, verse 22. In his chronicle, Ephraim of Ainos writes that Irene, the daughter of Theodore I Laskaris, was given as a bride 'to a man of the Vatatzes family who is named after grace' ('ἀνδρὶ χαριτόννημῳ Βατάτζῃ'), namely the future emperor John III Vatatzes: Ephraim, *Historia Chronica*, verses 7868–9. The association of Ἰωάννης with grace echoes the meaning of the name in Hebrew, namely 'God is gracious'.

Xenophon, saying: 'Speak up, Xenophon, in support of what I am saying!' ('λέγε Ξενοφῶν τῷ λόγῳ συνηγόρει!').<sup>162</sup> Still, this is only one verse, not an entire poem. Constantine, however, appeared to favour this practice of composing epigrams which would praise the works he was copying. Ioannis Vassis has identified him as the same Constantine who wrote an epigram of four verses commenting on the third polemic of Theodore of Stoudios against iconoclasts.<sup>163</sup> There, too, Constantine writes in the first person and addresses his words to 'father' Theodore, who is extolled for being 'a spiritual spring of most wise lessons, / which spouts streams of orthodox dogmas' ('Πηγὴ νοητῶν πάνσοφων διδαγμάτων / βλύζουσα κρουνοὺς ὀρθοδόξων δογμάτων'). This metaphor of a text as something—either a spring or a vessel—which contains precious knowledge makes its appearance in both of Constantine's epigrams, as will be shown shortly.

In the epigram dedicated to the *Epitome*, the chronicler is also praised for his method. Zonaras, we read, 'would collect honey from flowers in the manner of a bee' ('τὸν μελίσσης ἀνθολεκτήσας τρόπον'). In turn, Constantine, as a reader of the work, is compared to a beekeeper who reaps the harvest of honey, the results of Zonaras' labours. In Ancient and Medieval Greek literature, images of flowers and bees frequently appear in relation to poetic texts and anthologies of poetry and prose. Indicative of the wide use of these motifs in such literary contexts is that several Byzantine anthologies have come down to us today with the title *Melissa*; examples are the famous *Melissa* of Antony and the collection formerly known as *Melissa Augustana*.<sup>164</sup> The fact that the poet employs this imagery in connection with a prose text essentially implies that he regards Zonaras' chronicle as a compilation of earlier authors. Further, it shows that, much as a compiler chooses certain poems over others to incorporate in an anthology, Zonaras included in his account only a selection of the material he found in his source texts. Constantine highlights, moreover, that Zonaras displayed the information he had collected in such a concise manner that readers, including him, are able to learn about a series of subjects 'very quickly' ('ἐπιτρόχου'). According to the poet, in other words, Zonaras put together his compilation for a specific purpose: to offer information in a succinct format. The *Epitome* is understood to be a useful compendium of carefully selected pieces from older accounts.

<sup>162</sup> The translation of the verse can be found in Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 209.

<sup>163</sup> I. Vassis, *Initia carminum Byzantinorum* (Berlin, 2005), 616. The epigram has been published in PG, 99, 435–6, the quote is in verses 1–2.

<sup>164</sup> Both collections depend on the *Loci Communes*, the sacro-profane collection of Pseudo-Maximos. For the edition of the *Melissa* of Antony, dated perhaps to the eleventh century, see Antony, *Antonii Monachi cognomento Melissa Sententiae sive Loci Communes*, PG, 136, 765–1244. The *Melissa Augustana* or, as the collection is better known nowadays, the *Florilegium Baroccianum* or *Florilegium Monacense*, has been edited by É. Sargologos, *Florilège sacro-profane du Pseudo-Maxime* (Hermoupolis, 2001). In general, for the use of *Melissa* as a title for anthologies, see E. Jeffreys and A. Kazhdan, 'Melissa', ODB, II, 1335.

What follows next in the epigram is an outline of the topics presented in the first volume of the chronicle and a list of some significant sources used by Zonaras in this part of his work. Constantine tells us that, by reading the *Epitome*, he learned about the Octateuch and the Books of Kings, Chronicles, Esther, Judith, Tobit, and Esdras. He would certainly be familiar with the content of the Old Testament books, but the point he is making here is that, through the *Epitome*, he was able to remind himself about their contents very quickly. Apart from the Old Testament, the only other source he acknowledges is Josephus' *JA*. These, of course, are the sole works Zonaras himself names as his sources in the proem of his chronicle. The poet says, in addition, that he learned of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, the Persian rulers Cyrus, Xerxes, and Cambyses, the Macedonian expansion in the time of Alexander and the division of the Macedonian Empire. These themes also appear in the proem of the *Epitome*, where Zonaras makes special mention of all these rulers (save Cambyses). Finally, concerning the history of the Roman state, we read that Constantine came to know about 'the four types of Latin leadership' ('τὴν Λατίνων τετράτην ἀνταρχίαν') and 'the various Roman generalships' ('Ῥωμαϊκὴν ποικίλην στρατηγίαν'). The term 'ἀνταρχία', a word repeatedly employed by the chronicler in the course of his narrative of Rome, is encountered in the proem as well, when Augustus is said to have triumphed at the Battle of Actium, returned to Rome and 'gained the leadership' ('τῆς ἀνταρχίας ἀντεποιήσατο') of the state. In the epigram, in combination with 'τετράτην', which literally means fourth, the term must designate the four types of Roman government identified in the proem and elsewhere: monarchy; tyranny; aristocracy; and republic. In other words, Constantine learned from Zonaras about the development of the Roman political system. From these observations, it can be inferred that Constantine composed his epigram mainly based on the proem of the chronicle. No doubt he found it more efficient to rely on the proem, where Zonaras summarizes the major themes of his work and records some of his most important sources, rather than trying to recall such information himself or search back through his bulky manuscript for it.

The final eight verses of the epigram are extremely interesting, for they reinforce the conclusion that, as early as the thirteenth century, the two volumes of the *Epitome* were circulating separately. The poet expresses his keen disappointment at not having the second volume of the chronicle at his disposal. Having been captivated by Zonaras' narrative, he wants to read the entire text. He desires to learn about 'the emperors of the new Ausones (Romans)' ('βασιλείας [...] Ἀύσονων νέων'), Constantine the Great, and the emperors who reigned after him. Constantine is vaguely aware of the contents of the chronicle's second volume. He would certainly have read Zonaras' outline of the Roman and Byzantine material of his work in the *Epitome*'s proem. Also, he may have heard parts of the second volume being recited at the *theatra*. The epigram ends with Constantine wondering how he will manage to acquire the part of the text that is

not available to him: 'how, how will I receive the missing part of the sweet-flowing narrative?' ('ποῦ ποῦ τὸ λείπον τῆς μελιρροίας λάβω;')

These remarks on the content of the epigram may help us to focus more closely on the circumstances surrounding its production. From an examination of the handwriting in ff. 2<sup>r</sup>–101<sup>r</sup> (the first volume of the chronicle), 101<sup>v</sup> (the epigram), and 102<sup>r</sup>–216<sup>r</sup> (the second volume of the chronicle), I deduce that the entire manuscript was copied by the same hand. Also, in ff. 110<sup>r</sup> and 125<sup>v</sup> one can clearly make out the quire numbers: β' and γ', respectively. This evidence attests that the part of the codex which transmits the second volume was produced separately by the same scribe who copied the manuscript of the first volume. Some time later, the two manuscripts were bound together. The epigram, in other words, is located at the colophon of the initial codex, which preserved only the first volume of the *Epitome*. Its position in that manuscript is related to its purpose. The concluding verses, containing the phrases 'thirst', 'ask', and 'how will I receive [...]?', show that the poem was essentially a request. The person who composed or commissioned the composition of the epigram had read the first volume, but did not have access to the second. Through this epigram, he expressed his desire to read the rest of the work. Understandably, the poem would be read by those who accessed the manuscript. These would be learned friends of the manuscript's owner, to whom he had lent his copy of the *Epitome*. It is also plausible that he would recite the epigram along with sections of the chronicle in the *theatra* he attended, and would thus appeal to other members of his literary circle to provide him with the rest of Zonaras' work. Almost contemporary with the manuscript that included the first volume of the *Epitome*, the epigram should by extension be dated to the thirteenth century.

Concerning the identity of Constantine, the person whose name is inscribed before the epigram under consideration here as well as before the one in f. 33<sup>v</sup>, there exist three possibilities. First, Constantine might have been the owner of the manuscript and composed the epigrams himself. In this case, the scribe who copied the chronicle might have been asked by Constantine to copy his poems into the manuscript. A second possibility would be that Constantine was the copyist of the manuscript. He was commissioned by the owner of the codex to compose a poem that aimed to serve as a request for the second volume of the *Epitome*. Finally, it is plausible that Constantine was both the owner and the copyist of the manuscript.

Leone has remarked that the language of the text is a mixture of words derived from the *koine* and the ancient Greek literary tradition. The poet shows his creativity by inventing the new compound terms 'ἀθολεκτής', 'ἀρχαιόλεκτά', and 'μελιρροίας', which are all *hapax legomena* in Greek literature. The vocabulary in the concluding verses of the chronicle is taken from the context of drinking and thirst. The poet stresses that he is 'thirsting to drink the entire, later part of the narrative' ('διψῶ τὸν ἐξῆς ἐκπιεῖν ὅλον ῥόα') and compares the book in its

current incomplete form to 'a narrow vessel' ('ἄγγος ἐστενωμένον') which 'did not entirely contain inside the immense flow [of words]' ('ἔστεξεεν οὐ πάνυ ἔνδον ἄπλετον χύμα'). The abrupt cessation of the text leaves him 'thirsty' for the rest of Zonaras' narrative. The image of Zonaras' work as a vessel makes us recall the metaphor used in the other epigram attributed to Constantine—that of Theodore of Stoudios' text as a spring from which precious knowledge gushed forth. Constantine would apparently draw on common literary *topoi*. The use of such language in the epigram dedicated to Zonaras aims, of course, to underline the intense desire on the part of the poet to obtain the second volume of the *Epitome*. In terms of metrical structure, the literary quality of the verses is not particularly high. Constantine makes demonstrable mistakes in the length of the vowels, not only in the 'δίχρονα' alpha, iota, and upsilon but also in the long and short vowels.<sup>165</sup> Despite the metrical flaws of his epigram, however, Constantine must have been a relatively well-read individual who had studied the language of ancient Greek authors, and was also aware of the *topoi* of poetic tradition.

## 7.5 The Medieval Translations of the *Epitome*

The *Epitome* saw two translations into medieval languages, one into Church Slavonic and one into Aragonese, both of which date to the fourteenth century. In this investigation, I will concentrate on the features of the translations of the *Epitome* that caught the attention of foreign readers and the extent to which these were similar to the features of the original that were of interest to Byzantine audiences.

### 7.5.1 The Slavonic Translation

In the South Slavic world, the fourteenth century witnessed a revival of interest in Byzantine chronicles, as evidenced by the translations of four Byzantine chronicles into Church Slavonic, those of Zonaras, Constantine Manasses, George the Monk, and Symeon the Logothete, made during this period.<sup>166</sup> The translation of Zonaras' chronicle (henceforth: the *Slavonic Zonaras*), which has come down to us in eight manuscripts, was produced in Bulgaria during the rulership of tsar

<sup>165</sup> Leone, 'Miscellanea Critica (I)', 64.

<sup>166</sup> Sophoulis, 'Byzantine Chronicles', 204–6; Todorov, 'Monks', 148–51. Here, I note the Byzantine chronicles according to the chronological order in which they were translated. The order in which the original Greek works were composed is different: George the Monk (mid-ninth century); Symeon Logothete (second half of the tenth century); John Zonaras; and Constantine Manasses. The Slavonic translation of George the Monk's chronicle is based on the first version of the text, which appears to have been written in 846/847: Neville, *Guide*, 87.



Ivan Alexander (r. 1331–1371), probably before 1344.<sup>167</sup> Staying close to the original Greek text, it covers the period from the Creation to the early twelfth century. It circulated in a Serbian redaction as well, the so-called *Paralipomenon*, which was composed in 1407 or 1408 by a certain Gregory, a scribe and monk in the Hilandar monastery.<sup>168</sup> Interestingly, the *Slavonic Zonaras* also furnished some material to the text known as the *Bulgarian Short Chronicle*, a brief historical text written in the margins of a manuscript preserving the Slavonic translation of Manasses' chronicle.<sup>169</sup> In addition, it has been suggested that an independent translation of the *Epitome* might have been appended to the Slavonic translation of Symeon the Logothete's chronicle, thus extending the work beyond 948, when the oldest version of the original Greek text ended.<sup>170</sup>

One of the main reasons why Byzantine universal chronicles, such as Zonaras', were of interest to South Slavic audiences is that they were important sources of information about secular and biblical history. Bringing together material related to the emergence of Christianity and the early Christian past, as well as to the rise of the Roman Empire and Byzantium, its successor state, Byzantine chronicles helped Slavic readers extend their geographical and historical knowledge.<sup>171</sup> Naturally, reading the *Slavonic Zonaras* and other translated Byzantine chronicles, Slavic audiences adopted and accepted automatically the Byzantine perspective on historical developments.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, considering that there existed no full translation of the Old Testament into Slavonic before the late fifteenth century,<sup>173</sup> the *Slavonic Zonaras* and the other translations of universal chronicles must have attracted the attention of Slavic readers because they contained rich information about key events and figures mentioned in the Old Testament.

Additionally, the wide range of material included in the *Epitome* and Byzantine universal chronicles in general allowed Serbian and Bulgarian chroniclers to place

<sup>167</sup> For the translation of the *Epitome* into Slavonic, see *Die Byzantinische Geschichte bei Joannes Zonaras in slavischer Übersetzung*, ed. by A. Jacobs (Freiburg, 1970), which includes an edited section of the Slavonic text. For further information on the *Slavonic Zonaras*, see Sophoulis, 'Byzantine Chronicles', 203–4; Todorov, 'Monks', 149; Petrova, 'Hamartolos or Zonaras', 411–15.

<sup>168</sup> *Paralipomen Zonarini*, ed. by O. D. Bodjanskij (Moscow, 1847). See also Đurin, 'Three Monks', 15–19 for information on Gregory's method of translation; Petrova, 'Hamartolos or Zonaras', 413–14.

<sup>169</sup> This manuscript of the Slavonic Manasses is codex no. 38 of the Moscow State Historical Museum. For information about the *Bulgarian Short Chronicle* and its sources, see: M. Kaimakamova, 'Turnovo-Constantinople: The Third Rome in the Fourteenth-Century Bulgarian Translation of Constantine Manasses' *Synopsis Chronike*', in *The Medieval Chronicle IV*, ed. by E. Kooper (Amsterdam, 2006), 91–104, at 96–8; *The Chronicle of Constantine Manasses*, trans. into English by L. Yuretich (Liverpool, 2018), 10–17 (introduction).

<sup>170</sup> See the edition of the Slavonic translation of the Symeon the Logothete, *Slavjanskij perevod Chroniki Simeona Logotheta*, ed. by V. I. Sreznevskij (St Petersburg, 1905). However, Staffan Wahlgren notes that the similarities of the *Slavonic Zonaras* to the continuation of the Slavonic Symeon the Logothete could be explained in other ways, too, and therefore this subject deserves further investigation: Wahlgren, 'The Old Slavonic Translations', 165 (footnote 22).

<sup>171</sup> Sophoulis, 'Byzantine Chronicles', 202–3.

<sup>172</sup> Todorov, 'Monks', 147; Wahlgren, 'The Old Slavonic Translations', 164.

<sup>173</sup> H. Cooper, *Slavic Scriptures: The Formation of the Church Slavonic Version of the Holy Bible* (Madison, 2003), 34–5.

the history of their own states within the context of world history. From the *Slavonic Zonaras*, Bulgarian readers in particular could learn about significant events that marked the history of Byzantine–Bulgarian relations, such as the marriage of Maria Lekapene, granddaughter of the emperor Romanos Lekapenos, to Peter of Bulgaria, son of tsar Symeon I, in 927. Interestingly, it was through the *Slavonic Zonaras* and other Slavonic translations of Byzantine chronicles that information on the relationship between Byzantium and Bulgaria was transmitted to Old Russian sources as well.<sup>174</sup> South Slavic translators and redactors could even appropriate pieces of Zonaras' narrative to reinforce the historical background of their own peoples. It is characteristic that the Dacians, the ancient peoples who had resided in a region that in medieval times formed part of the kingdom of Serbia and were mentioned by Zonaras in the *Epitome*, were given the name Serbs in the *Slavonic Zonaras*,<sup>175</sup> thus allowing Serbian readers to trace the origin of their peoples back to Roman antiquity. Accordingly, Licinius, brother-in-law of Constantine the Great and emperor from 308 to 324, 'who drew his lineage from the Dacians' (ἐκ Δακῶν ἔλκοντα τὴν τοῦ γένους σειρᾶν),<sup>176</sup> is rendered as a Serb by birth in the *Paralipomenon*.<sup>177</sup> This is a telling alteration, one in line with various medieval genealogies of Serbian rulers, which presented the prominent Nemanjić dynasty as being descendants of Licinius and, consequently, related to Constantine the Great.<sup>178</sup> The *Paralipomenon* was produced by the monk Gregory at the request of Stefan Lazarević, the despot of Serbia at that time, who himself descended from the Nemanjić rulers.<sup>179</sup> Hence, as a royal commission, it served the ideological construct that the current despot was a descendant of Roman emperors, setting Stefan in a long line of rulers who led the Serbian land and stressing his political legitimacy.

Various evidence indicates that the translations of Byzantine chronicles, the *Slavonic Zonaras* included, were read for the purpose of moral instruction as well. Introducing his redaction of the *Slavonic Zonaras*, Gregory offers an insight into the reasons why Stefan took an interest in reading and copying the translation of the *Epitome*: 'but so that he might adorn his own manners and discourse with their wisdom [the wisdom of these historical writings], and that he might lavishly instruct the soul and lead it to those called upon by God'.<sup>180</sup> According to Gregory, Zonaras' chronicle would be beneficial to the Serbian despot for two reasons: for

<sup>174</sup> Z. Brzozowska, 'The Image of Maria Lekapene, Peter and the Byzantine-Bulgarian Relations Between 927 and 969 in the Light of Old Russian Sources', *Palaeobulgarica*, 1 (2017), 40–55, at 42, 53–4.

<sup>175</sup> Sophoulis, 'Byzantine Chronicles', 209; Petrova, 'Hamartolos or Zonaras', 411–12.

<sup>176</sup> *Epitome*, II, 624.2–3.

<sup>177</sup> Sophoulis, 'Byzantine Chronicles', 209; Petrova, 'Hamartolos or Zonaras', 412.

<sup>178</sup> Vasiljević, 'Imagining', 79–81.

<sup>179</sup> Đurin, 'Three Monks', 18–19; Vasiljević, 'Imagining', 79–81, which mentions that Stefan's connection to the Nemanjić dynasty was probably a fabrication.

<sup>180</sup> The translated extract is included in Todorov, 'Monks', 155.

applying the work's wise teachings to the way he behaved and spoke; and for offering him a guide to the cultivation of Christian virtues. The implication of Gregory's explanation is that the content of the *Slavonic Zonaras* would not only help Stefan improve his character but also instruct him on how to be a virtuous and good ruler. It appears, therefore, that the *Slavonic Zonaras* was perceived by Gregory, and perhaps by Stefan too, as a 'mirror for princes'. The Slavonic translation of Manasses' chronicle was also read as a 'mirror for princes', as can be inferred from the fact that readers of a sixteenth-century copy of the translation highlighted passages specifically concerning rulers and 'the shifting fate of rulers'.<sup>181</sup> Gregory's appreciation of the *Slavonic Zonaras* as a text replete with wisdom is also connected to the fact that it gave an account of early Christianity, thus echoing Christian principles and doctrines. It is no coincidence that other historical texts which were translated from Greek into Church Slavonic and were related to the biblical and early Christian past were also characterized as wise. In addition to Zonaras, Gregory also commends George the Monk for his wisdom, calling him the 'most wise chronicler George the Monk',<sup>182</sup> while, producing a copy of the Slavonic translation of *JW*, another fifteenth-century scribe attributes a similar characterization to Josephus.<sup>183</sup>

This brief overview of the reception of the *Slavonic Zonaras* by Slavic readers demonstrates that both the original Greek chronicle of Zonaras and its translation attracted the attention of their respective audiences for, to some extent, similar reasons. Byzantine and Slavic audiences took much interest in Zonaras as a historical source; hence, in both languages the chronicle offered material for the composition of later historical texts. One can assume, however, that in the South Slavic world the chronicle acquired special importance as a text preserving material specifically on Old Testament history. Moreover, both Byzantine and Slavic readers appreciated the practical dimension of the work, acknowledging its ethical and didactic purposes.

### 7.5.2 The Aragonese Translation

Aragonese was the first Western European language into which the *Epitome* was translated.<sup>184</sup> Prior to this translation, Zonaras' chronicle was unknown to the West. The Aragonese translation is partial, covering the section from approximately 717, when Leo III ascended to the Byzantine throne, to 1118, when the *Epitome* ends. It was commissioned by a notable bibliophile and literary patron of the late fourteenth century, the Aragonese Juan Fernández de Heredia,

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.                      <sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>183</sup> Kampianaki, 'Perceptions', 307–8.

<sup>184</sup> For the Aragonese translation of the *Epitome*, see Zonaras, *Libro de los Emperadores*.

who was Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes from 1377 to his death in 1396.<sup>185</sup> After he assumed the post of Grand Master, Fernández de Heredia led a campaign in Epirus, where he was caught by the Albanians and was later sold to the Ottomans.<sup>186</sup> It was during his time in captivity in central Greece that he developed a vivid interest in the Greek past, perhaps searching for and reading books about Greek history.<sup>187</sup> He was eventually released and reached Rhodes in 1379. During his time on the island, he sponsored the translation of a number of Plutarchean *Lives* into Aragonese.<sup>188</sup> He remained in Rhodes until 1382, when he departed for the papal court of Avignon, an important intellectual centre of the period. There, he commissioned translations of texts that covered a broad sweep of Ancient and Medieval Greek history: thirty-eight speeches from Thucydides,<sup>189</sup> Zonaras' chronicle and the fourteenth-century *Chronicle of Morea*,<sup>190</sup> in addition to the *Historia Troiana*, a Latin poetic text dedicated to the destruction of Troy.<sup>191</sup> The selection of these works reflects Fernández de Heredia's general antiquarian interests in the continuous history of a region.<sup>192</sup>

The Aragonese translation of the *Epitome* is preserved in a single manuscript, codex 10131 of the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid, in which the text is given the title *Libro de los emperadores*.<sup>193</sup> It is included in ff. 1a–180b of the manuscript, followed by the *Libro de los fechos et conquistas del Principado de la Morea* (the translation of the *Chronicle of Morea*) in ff. 183a–266b. From the scribal notes in the manuscript, we learn that the name of the copyist was Bernard de Iaqua and that he completed the copying of the *Libro de los emperadores* on 5 March 1393. The translation is preceded by a prologue and a list of chapters, which were written in Avignon after Fernández de Heredia's death. The *Libro de los emperadores* and the *Libro de los fechos* may not have been initially intended to

<sup>185</sup> For information on the life and career of Fernández de Heredia, see Luttrell, 'History'; Luttrell, 'Greek Histories'.

<sup>186</sup> N. Agrait, 'Heredia, Juan Fernández de', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Medieval Warfare and Military Technology. Volume 1*, ed. by C. J. Rogers (Oxford, 2010), 265–6, at 265; Luttrell, 'Greek Histories', 402.

<sup>187</sup> Luttrell, 'History', 32; Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, 82.

<sup>188</sup> Pade, 'The Reception of Plutarch', 538; Luttrell, 'History', 32–3; Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, 82–3.

<sup>189</sup> M. Pade, 'The Renaissance. Scholarship, Criticism, and Education', in *A Handbook*, ed. by Lee and Morley, 26–42, at 26–7; J. C. Iglesias-Zoido, 'The Speeches of Thucydides and the Renaissance Anthologies', in *A Handbook*, ed. by Lee and Morley, 43–60, at 46–50; Pade, 'Thucydides', 784–5.

<sup>190</sup> Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, 38–9.

<sup>191</sup> M. Sanz Julián, 'La *Crónica Troyana* de Juan Fernández de Heredia como amalgama de géneros', *Scriptura*, 23–24–25 (2016), 65–91; Luttrell, 'History', 33.

<sup>192</sup> One of the most notable historical compilations commissioned by Fernández de Heredia is the so-called *La Grant Cronica de Espanya*, 'a history of Spain from early times onwards': Luttrell, 'History', 31. A detailed list of the literary projects, particularly translations and historical compilations, instigated by Fernández de Heredia can be found in P. Conerly, 'Fernández de Heredia, Juan', in *Dictionary of the Literature of the Iberian Peninsula. A–K*, ed. by G. Bleiberg, M. Ihrie, and J. Pérez (Westport, 1993), 593–4.

<sup>193</sup> For a detailed discussion about the manuscript, see Zonaras, *Libro de los Emperadores*, xxx–xxxii and Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, 38–9.

form parts of the same manuscript, as the original folio numbers of the two texts are different and are written by different hands and with different ink.<sup>194</sup> They were put together at some point by 1412, when the manuscript is listed in an inventory of the library of King Martin of Aragon (r. 1356–1410).<sup>195</sup>

The translation of the *Epitome* was completed in two stages. Zonaras' original Greek text was first translated into contemporary spoken Greek by a certain Demetrios Kalodikis of Thessalonike, and then into Aragonese by Nicholas, the Dominican bishop of the titular see of Drenopolis, who was of Western origin.<sup>196</sup> A similar two-stage translation process was followed in other projects instigated by Fernández de Heredia, notably the translations of Plutarch's *Lives* and Thucydides' speeches.<sup>197</sup> Although the manuscript of the *Epitome* in Greek of a lower linguistic register does not survive,<sup>198</sup> verbal echoes of this text, such as contemporary vocabulary which must have been used to replace the classicizing terminology in the *Epitome*, appear in the Aragonese translation.<sup>199</sup>

The prologue composed after Fernández de Heredia's death offers no indications as to the reasons why the Grand Master undertook this project. It is of interest, though, because it makes clear that the translated text was perceived by the scholars in Fernández de Heredia's circle as an account of the reigns of Greek emperors. The prologue explicitly states that the work deals with 'notable and admirable authorities' (*notables e admirantes autoridades*), concerning emperors 'who were in Greece' (*que fueron en Grecia*).<sup>200</sup> In the list of chapters, too, most chapters are titled after the name of an emperor,<sup>201</sup> which echoes, of course, Zonaras' own structure of the chronicle into units of reign. The characterizations 'notables e admirantes' attributed to the Greek emperors, as figures of authority, imply that the work presents imperial actions that were of worthy of admiration and consequently imitation, perhaps by the kings of Aragon, to whom the Grand Master's books passed after his death. It is interesting in this connection that king Joan of Aragon specifically asked to be sent a number of works that were in Fernández de Heredia's possession and dealt with the history of Greece, including

<sup>194</sup> Luttrell, 'History', 35; Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, 39.

<sup>195</sup> Luttrell, 'History', 35–6.

<sup>196</sup> Zonaras, *Libro de los Emperadores*, xxxviii–xlvi. Interestingly, the fourteenth century saw a surge of interest in translations of Byzantine texts written in classicizing Greek into Greek of a lower register. In addition to Zonaras' *Epitome*, two other significant historical works were given such translations in this period, Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* and Niketas Choniates' *History*: J. Davis, 'Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates "Translated": The Fourteenth-Century Byzantine Metaphrases', in *History As Literature*, ed. by Macrides, 55–70.

<sup>197</sup> Luttrell, 'History', 32–3; Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, 83–4; Pade, 'Thucydides', 785.

<sup>198</sup> The editors of the *Libro de los emperadores* believe that Kalodikis must have used a manuscript of the *Epitome* closely linked with the fourteenth-century *Monac. gr. 325*: Zonaras, *Libro de los Emperadores*, xxx.

<sup>199</sup> Zonaras, *Libro de los Emperadores*, xxxviii–xxxix.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 3–4. The writer of the prologue refers specifically to emperors of Greece clearly copying the text proper, where Byzantine rulers are called emperors 'de Grecia'.

<sup>201</sup> Zonaras, *Libro de los Emperadores*, 4–6.

the 'Emperados', which might have been the translation of Zonaras' chronicle.<sup>202</sup> If regarded as a text focusing on imperial acts worthy of emulation, the *Libro de los emperadores* functioned essentially as a 'mirror for princes'.

The *Libro de los emperadores* is not an accurate translation of the *Epitome*, but rather a redaction. Zonaras' original proem is absent and is replaced with an introduction offering a brief account of the Isaurian dynasty up to the reign of Constantine VI and his mother, Irene, who ruled as regent. From this point on, the text proper begins and the narrative is more detailed. The introduction does not provide any explanation as to why the reign of the Isaurian emperors—the dynasty who launched iconoclasm—was chosen as the starting point of the translation. No prosopographical data about Zonaras or contextual information surrounding the production of the original Greek text are included either, presumably because Fernández de Heredia knew the basics about Zonaras already and was not interested in the details noted in the proem of the *Epitome*. In the text itself, much of Zonaras' material is presented in an abbreviated form, while various segments of the original text, whether shorter or more extensive, are completely omitted.<sup>203</sup> The text derives a range of different material found in the *Epitome*, from details on imperial policies and military expeditions to anecdotal stories related to an emperor's origins and character. The *Libro de los emperadores* closes by briefly summarizing and translating Zonaras' inference that there can be no perfect emperors and that no ruler is without fault.

In all, much like Byzantine readers, Fernández de Heredia, too, appreciated the value of Zonaras' chronicle as a historical source transmitting abundant information on imperial history. Hence, he commissioned a partial translation of the chronicle into his native language. For him, however, the *Libro de los emperadores* was a work which focused on the reigns of Greek emperors and satisfied his broader antiquarian interests in the Greek past, rather than a text giving an account of the history of the Roman state.

It is now time to reach some conclusions. Bringing together all the evidence presented in the course of this chapter will help pinpoint the reasons why the chronicle was such a huge success among Byzantine readers.

To begin with, it was a very useful compendium, since it dealt with a wide array of subjects. Indicative of this is that most patrons who commissioned a copy of the chronicle were interested in accessing the whole text and therefore asked for the reproduction of both volumes, instead of one of the two or even shorter parts of the work. The variety of topics which, according to the commentator in the *Par. gr.* 1715 (no. 1), are covered by the chronicler exemplifies this perception of the work as a broad textbook. Readers, moreover, could derive substantial

<sup>202</sup> Luttrell, 'History', 35; Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea*, 82.

<sup>203</sup> Zonaras, *Libro de los Emperadores*, xxxv–xxxvi.

information about these subjects quite quickly, as Constantine, the composer of the epigram contained in the *Vat. gr.* 136 (no. 5), remarks.

Closely related to this point is that the *Epitome* was considered to be a significant and reliable historical source for authors to exploit in their own works. Byzantine writers who aspired to compose a universal chronicle themselves would depend heavily on Zonaras' account of Jewish, Roman, and Byzantine history. Even authors in the Slavic world appreciated and employed the translation of the *Epitome* as a source for their own historical narratives. To Byzantine authors who sought to recount the history of the Church, furthermore, the chronicle offered a rich vein of material concerning ecclesiastical affairs. It would also accommodate the interests of readers who wanted to learn more about a particular historical period. As has been shown in the study of the codices that do not transmit the entire text, for instance, the *Epitome* attracted much attention as a source of imperial history. This was also the reason why Fernández de Heredia fostered the translation of the chronicle into Aragonese.

A further remarkable reason that accounts for the high esteem in which the chronicle was held is its ethical tone. Very enlightening in this respect is the characterization of Zonaras as a wise author that we encounter in the ecclesiastical chronicle of the *Oxon. Baroc. gr.* 25 and the introduction to the Slavonic translation of the *Epitome*, as well as the understanding of Zonaras' account of the Lekapenoi as a moral lesson, in the case of the scribe of the *Vind. hist. gr.* 16. The author of the commentary in the *Par. gr.* 1715 also expresses the view that the chronicle offers valuable pieces of advice concerning human life and constitutes a practical guide to how people of a different status should behave. It is particularly noteworthy that certain readers of both the original Greek text and the medieval translations regarded Zonaras' account as a work fit for the moral instruction of rulers.

Finally, the linguistic register of the *Epitome* certainly contributed to its popularity. It is once again the anonymous commentator of the Paris manuscript who concisely explains the effectiveness of Zonaras' language; the chronicler writes in a clear, not overly rhetorical style that befits a historical account. If we accept that Constantine Akropolites is indeed the author of the commentary, this must be the reason why, in his own chronicle, he copies Zonaras almost word for word. In any case, the fact that later chroniclers (Manasses, Glykas, Ephraim of Ainos, Constantine Akropolites) would draw on the language of the text attests to their appreciation of the *Epitome* as a literary product.

This overview illustrates then that Zonaras' chronicle became widely popular in the Byzantine world and beyond for various reasons. Essentially, it was because the work corresponded to the tastes, the needs, and the aims of many different readers. It appealed to audiences of different social backgrounds—secular men of letters, churchmen, and monks, all of whom were able to understand a text written in middlebrow Greek.



## Overall Conclusions

Through the analysis of the *Epitome* in this book, I hope to have shed light on some important aspects of this chronicle, which, though a popular and well-known text among the Byzantines, has been little studied by modern scholars. This examination can help us to draw some broader conclusions about Zonaras and the overall character of his historical account.

Zonaras lived and wrote at a time when the Empire was at a critical point. The Komnenian style of rulership had brought about significant changes in government and military administration. At the same time, the establishment of trade treaties between Byzantium and the Italian city states, as well as the Crusades, led to a stream of Westerners arriving in the imperial capital. This background impacted, directly or indirectly, on various aspects of the *Epitome*: the author's political and social ideas; the choice of his source material; and the emphasis on particular subjects. Zonaras shows himself to be a man of his time: his selection of source texts echoes current literary preferences and his concerns mirror discussions among his contemporaries. He was brave enough to openly express his political views and condemn what he considered the mismanagement of public affairs by the ruling dynasty. He was versatile as an author, composing texts in various literary genres. His critical and analytical skills can be seen in the way in which he collects, selects, and adapts materials from different sources to create a composite narrative.

A good way of characterizing the *Epitome* is as a 'hybrid composition', a work which combines elements of two different yet interconnected literary traditions: chronicle writing and historiography. The text presents the external features of a chronicle: it starts with the Creation of the world and extends as far as Zonaras' own days, it makes heavy use of earlier material, and it is written in middlebrow Greek. The author consciously follows conventions typical of chronicles; he does not include lengthy speeches in his narrative, and avoids writing in an erudite and difficult style as a means of displaying his rhetorical training. His goal behind this was to broaden the readership of his work from a narrow audience of highly educated intellectuals to a larger group of relatively cultivated readers.

Nevertheless, the *Epitome* has qualities that set it apart from other chronicles, such as those by John Malalas, Theophanes, Michael Glykas, and Ephraim of Ainos, for example, bringing Zonaras' text close to classicizing historiographies. While remaining within the boundaries of middlebrow Greek, Zonaras composes an account in an elevated, sophisticated literary style. In his narrative, we find

linguistic features of Attic Greek prose which would certainly appeal to the intellectual elite. Much like authors of historiographies who recounted recent or contemporary events, Zonaras elaborates on the political context of his own time, commenting on and criticizing the reforms of Alexios Komnenos. He also breaks the mould of chronographic tradition by devoting a lengthy part of his narrative to the Roman Republic, a period which almost every other chronicler dealt with in brief. He shows an avid interest in the institutions of the republican form of government and makes it his goal to clarify to his audience the way that Roman political constitutions evolved.

An additional reason why the work can be called a 'hybrid' is because it combines two distinct historical accounts: the first is dedicated to Jewish history or, from the Byzantines' perspective, early Christian history; and the second focuses on the Roman past. Unlike other authors of universal chronicles, who mingle Jewish and Roman materials, Zonaras divides the history of the people of Israel and the antiquities of the Romans into two clearly defined sections. This highlights that, according to Zonaras, the early history of Christianity merits a separate investigation and presentation.

Oddly enough, these final remarks lead us back to the title of the book: 'A Compendium of Jewish-Roman History'. An idea that is emphasized by the author at the beginning of his text is that of brevity; by abridging his source material, Zonaras sought to compose a narrative which would offer in summary the essentials of early Christian and Roman history. Including only significant information in his narrative, he aimed to produce a useful account for his audience. In this sense, it was a short yet complete 'guide' to Christian-Roman history. The accessible linguistic register of the chronicle served this purpose.

In other words, the *Epitome* is neither a typical chronicle nor a proper high-style historiography, but a creation which seamlessly merges the two traditions. The unique character of Zonaras' text certainly made the work stand out and helped to endear the text to readers in Byzantium and beyond. This evaluation of the *Epitome* as a work with its own individual qualities and features, rather than simply a compilation of earlier sources, indicates that some Byzantine chronicles deserve to be investigated in their own right as both literary compositions and historical accounts.

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